GLIMPSES OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE

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Edited by

A. N. D. Haksar

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Foreword

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations has great pleasure in presenting this volume on Sanskrit Literature.

Sanskrit has an unbroken literary tradition of at least three thousand years stretching into present times. As the lingua franca of India's cultural growth and the principal vehicle of its thought for much of this period, it has a unique position in national identity. Its study occupies a prominent place, both in traditional learning and in current scholarship on various aspects of Indic civilization. But the fruit of this knowledge has, to a considerable extent, tended to stay within the domain of the scholar and the specialist. It is widely known that Sanskrit has a vast ancient literature. What it comprises, apart from the famous sacred and philosophical works, is not equally well known.

The intention in bringing out the present volume is to provide for the modern lay reader, both in India and abroad, an informative survey of Sanskrit literature which is attuned to general interest and, at the same time, inspired by scholarship of the first rank. Included as a special feature is a select anthology of translated excerpts from well-known Sanskrit classics, which will give readers a flavour of the language's genius and its rich literary heritage.

The objective of the Council's publication programme is to project India's cultural image through the print medium. The programme includes six periodical journals in Hindi, English, Spanish, French and Arabic, and over 200 titles already published in different languages. These publications also represent a wealth of knowledge and scholarship on diverse aspects of Indian culture, which gives them a lasting value.

Translations from Sanskrit classics like *Shakuntala* and *Vikram-Urvashi* figured among the Council's earliest publications. But a comprehensive compilation giving a broad perspective of this magnificent literature for general readership remained a long felt

need. The Council is grateful to the distinguished Indian and foreign scholars who have contributed to this volume. The task of assembling them, as also of devising the format of contents and editing the whole volume was entrusted to former Indian Ambassador A.N.D. Haksar, a student and translator of Sanskrit classics in the old tradition of scholar-diplomats. We thank him for agreeing to be the guest editor of this special issue on Sanskrit Literature, which the Council is very pleased to place before the public. Their comments, will, as always, be most welcome.

New Delhi
October 29, 1995

Meera Shankar
Director General
Indian Council for Cultural Relations

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Contents

Introduction

Sanskrit has a long history as a language of thought, learning and culture in India and beyond. Though a part of its literature may have been lost over the course of time, some has been recovered in the last century, and a huge corpus covering a vast variety of topics is available. Most of it is the subject of traditional study or modern research, but only a part of it usually comes before the public eye. In the present popular perception of Sanskrit as a major component of India's cultural heritage, it is as the language of religion and philosophy that it is best known. One of the important effects of this perception has been to deemphasize the other dimensions of the literary wealth of Sanskrit as a whole.

The effort here is to present Sanskrit literature purely as literature: as poetry, drama and prose, as inspirational and creative, narrative, descriptive, gnomic and aphoristic expression of literary value. Examples of this, often of surpassing excellence, are also found in scriptural texts, as will be seen reflected in some of the contributions and a section of the translations included in this compilation. But the focus here, in the main, is on secular classical literature as compared to sacred or philosophical works. The latter have been researched and translated extensively. Some, like the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the principal *Upanishads* and Vedic hymns, are already widely known. But classical literature, to quote the late Harvard Sanskritist Daniel Ingalls, "has remained to the English reader, like the Sleeping Beauty of the fairy tale, hidden behind a hedge of thorns." This collection seeks to provide a small opening in that hedge of mostly recondite study of a cloistered knowledge.

Given the formidable range of Sanskrit literature, the attempt here is to provide a broad perspective of it through an initial overview, followed by a series of closer looks at specific facets. The former also touches on the Vedic period; the latter include the epics, later poetry, drama and prose; the aphoristic literature of the

anthologies; epigraphic literature; and examples of technical works. Also considered are the development of Sanskrit aesthetics and literary criticism; and the interaction between Sanskrit and other poetry. The spread of Sanskrit literary activity is further exemplified by an area study of its quantum in a single region. The perspective is brought up to the present with a review of contemporary writings and studies abroad.

It is our good fortune that the format outlined above has been illuminated by contributions from eminent academic specialists. Dr. N.P. Unni appraises the sweep of Sanskrit literature as a whole in an introductory survey. Professor R.P. Goldman looks anew at the seminal legacy of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki, while some poetic aspects of the *Mahābhārata* are analyzed by Professor S.P. Narang. Dr. R.P. Mishra describes and quotes from the principal Sanskrit dramatists and their works, while Dr. S. Rath focusses on two towering figures among them, Kalidāsa and Bhāsa. Dr. F. Hardy comments, with interesting examples, on the mutual influence of Sanskrit and other poetic forms, and Dr. H. Tieken recalls the beauties of Hála's Prakrit verses. A neglected but important aspect, the poetry of Sanskrit inscriptions found in and outside India, is illustrated with translations by Professor S. Pollock. Dr. Sukumari Bhattacharji makes a critical review of gnomic and epigrammatic verse anthologies which are a characteristic of Sanskrit literature, while Professor Saroja Bhate does the same for works in prose, including also her translation of a sample from Bāṇa. Professor A.K. Warder traces the evolution of the aesthetic criteria and the literary theories on which Indians judged their own literature. Many of these theories originated in Kashmir, and Dr. Ved Kumari Ghai studies the overall contribution to Sanskrit literature from that part of the county. Illustrative examples of technical literature, ranging from linguistics and mathematics to lexicography and medicine, are provided by Dr. P.S. Filliozat and Professor S.V. Shastri, also touching upon some scientific aspects of the Vedic corpus. Professor R.V. Tripathi surveys contemporary Sanskrit writings, pointing to the continued currency of this ancient but far from dead language. Finally, Dr. A. Sharma raises pertinent issues while describing the sizeable extent of ongoing Sanskrit studies outside India. Also deserving mention in this context are the studies taking place in some countries with historic cultural links with India, like Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Thailand.

Individually, these essays will give the reader some revealing glimpses of significant aspects of Sanskrit literature; together, they present a panoramic view pointed out by expert guides. It is supplemented with a select anthology of English translations of excerpts from Sanskrit classics to enable the literature to speak for itself. This indeed is the most effective way of making it better known, and a larger anthology would have been compiled but for physical limitations. Differences of linguistic construction and literary convention compound the difficulties of translating from Sanskrit into English, but the samples included here should disprove, at least in part, the contention of earlier scholars like Keith that Sanskrit poetry is essentially untranslatable. It must however be acknowledged that good literary translations into English are not easy to come by, and more need to be encouraged to make it possible for Sanskrit literature to reach a bigger audience.

There is an unavoidable overlap between some contributions, given the impossibility of complete compartmentalization in dealing with our subject. The observant reader will also note divergences, of opinion as well as fact. The former are inescapable in the format here adopted; the latter, specially in respect of dating and ascription, are not uncommon in any historiography where there is a paucity of conclusive evidence, as in the case of Sanskrit. The views expressed in their contributions are naturally those of the individual authors, and not necessarily shared by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations or the present editor. Some indeed may be questioned by other scholars. In editing no attempt has been made to harmonize chronology or attribution, transliteration, or the usage of Nagari or Roman scripts for Sanskrit quotations.

The question of selection always poses problems in any work such as this. Exclusions are regrettable, but inevitable, given the mass of material needing notice and the limits of space. This has affected the choice of subjects to be covered in the essays, as well as the excerpts to be included in the translations. The reasons for concentration on pure literature as such have already been explained; for what has got left out, the reader's sufferance alone can be solicited. Hopefully, this "lion's view", to use the Sanskrit expression for a brief look behind as one moves forward, will attract readers to venture further into the verdant groves of Sanskrit literature in search of other delectable fare.

It remains for the editor to record his deep gratitude to the sixteen distinguished scholars of Sanskrit and Indic studies who have kindly contributed to this volume. The ten Indian contributors hail from far corners of the land, ranging from Kerala to Kashmir, and Maharashtra to West Bengal; one teaches in distant Canada. The six foreign contributors are from North America and West Europe: if scholarship from other regions is not represented, it is mainly because of the language of this publication. I would crave the indulgence of all these academicians for any editing or printing lapses which may still persist in their contributions despite corrections, as also for any omissions by oversight in the biographical notes.

I thank Shri Niranjan Desai, the then Director General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, for inviting me to edit this work and for giving the initial ideas regarding its outline; and his successor, Shri Shiv Shankar Mukherjee, for his consistent cooperation while the project was in progress. His sucessor in turn, Shrimati Meera Shankar, is to be thanked for the final publication. Appreciation is due to Dr. Vidya Niwas Misra for his suggestions about the format, and to Dr. G. Panda, Deputy Educational Adviser (Sanskrit), Department of Education, for providing particulars of possible contributors as well as the details now contained in the appendix. The latter are for those readers who may wish to know about Indian institutions connected with Sanskrit studies and publications.

I am also grateful to Shri Amit Dasgupta, Deputy Director General, Shri Ashok Srinivasan, Senior Programme Director, Shri O.P. Madan, Programme Director and, in particular, to Shri Padam Talwar, Programme Officer and Shrimati Nishi Malhotra, all from the Council's New Delhi office, for their ready assistance at different times in furthering the preparation of this publication. Special thanks are due to the publishers represented by Shri V.S. Johri of New Age International (P) Limited. I am indebted to Shri Madhav K. Dar for his general comments. Above all I am grateful to my wife Shrimati Priti Haksar for her unfailing support and understanding in this as in all my endeavours.

A. N. D. Haksar

1

Evolution of Sanskrit Literature: A Reappraisal

N. P. Unni

Sanskrit has been the language of India's religion, philosophy and culture, a source of inspiration for her intellectual and aesthetic achievements and a great instrument for establishing unity throughout the land. The history of Sanskrit literature generally falls into two main periods, namely, the Vedic and the Classical. The former perhaps begins as early as 1500 BC and extends at the latest about 200 BC. The Classical period concurrent with the final stages of Vedic literature, strictly speaking, closes with the turn of the millenium. But owing to the continued literary use of Sanskrit this period may be regarded as coming down to the present day.

The Vedic Period

The term *Veda* is applied to a group of literature that forms the earliest records of Indian civilization or, to put it safely, the Vedas are the earliest literary records since tradition asserts that these are eternal. These texts are classified mainly into four groups: the *Ṛk*, the *Yajus*, the *Sāman* and the *Atharvan*, each of them having different recensions called *śākhās*. The *Ṛgveda* consists of 10 *maṇḍalas* 1028 *sūktas* and 10552 *mantras* (or 8 *aṣṭakas*, 64 *adhyāyas*, 2024 *vargas* and 10552 *mantras*). In the *Yajurveda* there are 40 *adhyāyas* and 1975 *mantras* while the *Sāmaveda* contains 27 *adhyāyas* and 1875 *mantras*.

The *Atharvaveda* has 20 *kāṇḍas*, 731 *sūktas* and 5977 *mantras*. The whole literature is available only in portions and hence it is difficult to get a comprehensive picture.

These four Vedas have their own *Brāhmaṇas* which are explanatory portions. Here again all the materials are not available. Some of those available are called *Aitareya, Kauṣītaki, Taittirīya, Śatapatha, Tāṇḍya* and *Gopatha*. There are further portions of the *Brāhmaṇas* known as *Āraṇyakas*, or forest treatises, which deal with certain disciplines to be observed; and the *Upaniṣads* form the third and final part of the *Brāhmaṇas*. Though all the Vedas do not have an *Āraṇyaka;* there are *Upaniṣads* attached to all the Vedas.

Vedāṅgas or auxiliary texts necessary for understanding the Vedas are regarded as six; viz., *Śikṣā* (phonetics), *Kalpa* (ritual manuals), *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology) *Chandas* (metres) and *Jyotiṣa* (astronomy). *Kalpa* dealing with rituals is of three kinds as *Śrauta Sūtras* (Vedic manuals), *Gṛhya Sūtras* (domestic manuals) and *Dharma Sūtras* (legal manuals).

Various other texts have come down to us as Vedas like the *Gāndharvaveda* (science of music), *Dhanurveda* (science of archery) and *Āyurveda* (science of life or medicine). *Āgama śāstras* or texts dealing with the worship of deities and idols in temples are also regarded as based on the Vedas. Then there are commentaries on the above texts all of which are included in the generic term of Vedic literature. *Ānvīkṣikī* or *Mīmāṁsā* (critical investigation of the purport of the Vedas) is another branch closely related to it.

Ancient Science

All the sciences and arts of India trace their origin to the Vedas, particularly the *Atharvaveda* which gives us an insight into the scientific knowledge of the period. The necessity of laying out the sacrificial altar in accordance with measurements given in the instructions suggests a simple system of geometry. Mathematics and astronomy were in a highly developed stage and the Indian mathematician had a clear conception of the abstract number as distinguished from numerical quantity or spatial extension. With the aid of a simple numerical notation India devised a rudimentary algebra. The value of *śūnya* or zero was a fundamental contribution made by India even before Āryabhaṭṭa (AD 449) and this knowledge was later acquired by Arabs and Romans through their trade contacts. As already noted *Āyurveda* and astronomy, including

astrology, form part of the auxiliaries of the Vedas. Surgery was not unknown as over 125 surgical instruments are mentioned by Suśruta. The Vedas are indeed the foundation of all Sanskrit literature—general and technical—that developed later.

The Classical Period

The second period came to be called Sanskrit, the 'refined' as against Prākṛt, which was the 'unrefined' dialect. From the second century onwards, probably Sanskrit was a spoken language in the whole of Āryāvarta between the Himalayas and the Vindhya range. Dramas show that even those who did not speak Sanskrit understood it. From the sixth century onwards Sanskrit also prevails in inscriptions and by the time of the Muslim incursion it was perhaps the only written language of India.

As regards the form, the classical period contrasts with the Vedic period. While prose was employed in the *Yajurveda* and *Brāhmaṇa*s and developed to a certain degree, it appears less in classical Sanskrit. For, nearly every branch of the literature, excepting perhaps grammar and philosophy, is composed in verse, literary prose being found only in fables, fairy-tales, romances and partially in the dramas.

The general contents of classical literature embrace a variety of secular subjects. The period touches perfection in many branches of literature: in the epics, in *Purāṇa*s, in court epics or *Mahākāvya*s, in prose romances, in dramas, in fairy-tales and fables and finally in commentaries.

Epics and Purāṇas

Sanskrit epic poetry falls into two main classes, *Itihāsa* or legend which comprises old stories, and *Kāvya* or artificial epic. While the *Mahābhārata* is the chief and oldest representative of the former group, the *Rāmāyaṇa* represents the latter division. Both these great epics are composed in the *śloka* metre which prevails in the classical period.

The *Mahābhārata* in its present form consists of over 100,000 *śloka*s and is perhaps the longest poem in literary history. Consisting of eighteen books called *parvans*, with a nineteenth, the *Harivaṁśa* forming a supplement, the work is a conglomerate of epic and didactic matter. The number of verses in each *parvan* varies. All the eighteen books excepting the eighth and the last three are divided

into subordinate *parvans* which are divided into several chapters. The epic kernel of the *Mahābhārata* describes the eighteen days war between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas ending in the destruction of the former. After some more years the victors go to the Himalayas leaving Parīkṣita, the grandson of Arjuna, to rule over Hastināpura. Within this narrative framework there are numerous legends of gods and kings and sages, accounts of cosmogony and theogony, and disquisitions on philosophy, religion and ethics. The *Bhagavadgītā*, the philosophical poem consisting of eighteen cantos, is included in it. The *Harivaṁśa*, containing 16,000 verses and divided into three sections, narrates the family history of Kṛṣṇa. The sage Vyāsa, the son of Parāśara, is the compiler of the *Mahābhārata* as is mentioned in the work itself. The exact date of the compilation remains anybody's guess.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* in its present form consists of about 24,000 verses and is divided into seven books called *kāṇḍas*. Composed by the sage Vālmīki, the work shows excellence in plan and execution. It describes in detail Rāma's exile, the abduction of his wife Sītā by Rāvaṇa, his efforts to find and regain her and his final victory over Rāvaṇa. The second part or *Uttarakāṇḍa* describes the banishment of Sītā, whom Vālmiki takes to his hermitage where she delivers Kuśa and Lava, whom the sage himself brings up. The story ends with Rāma's meeting with his sons, his wife having been swallowed by the mother earth.

The *Purāṇas* constitute an important branch of classical literature and are often designated as the fifth Veda. The name *Purāṇa* signifies 'old traditional story'. Composed chiefly in the *śloka* metre with occasional passages in prose, they deal with a vast range of subjects. They are eighteen in number and are said to have been composed by the ancient sage Vyāsa. They often aim at exalting one of the three gods of the Hindu Trinity. Thus the eighteen *Purāṇas* are classified according to the deity who is exalted. *Brāhma, Brahmāṇḍa, Brahmavaivarta, Mārkaṇḍeya, Bhaviṣya* and *Vāmana Purāṇas* are related to Brahmā, the creator. Another group, namely, *Viṣṇu, Bhāgavata, Nāradīya, Garuḍa, Padma* and *Varāha* are Vaiṣṇava *Purāṇas*. The *Purāṇas* that glorify Śiva are *Śiva, Liṅga, Skanda, Agni, Matsya* and *Kūrma*.

Besides these there are eighteen *Upapurāṇas*. The *Purāṇas* do not belong to one particular period. While some of them are very ancient, others are more recent.

Kāvya Literature

It is not easy to trace the beginnings of *kāvya*s in Sanskrit literature. They must certainly belong to a much earlier period. For we have the important literary evidence of the references in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* which show that *kāvyas* flourished in his day.

Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* are two earlier *kāvya*s. He was a contemporary of King Kaniṣka of the first century AD and himself a Buddhist. The two most important *kāvya*s are *Raghuvaṁśa* and *Kumārasaṁbhava* by Kālidāsa, who probably lived in the beginning of the fifth century AD. *Raghuvaṁśa,* the line of Raghu, describes in nineteen cantos, the story of Rāma together with his forefathers and successors. Beginning with Dilīpa, the story ends with the death of Agnivarṇa. *Kumārasaṁbhava* consists of seventeen cantos. Beginning with the courtship of Śiva and Pārvatī the story ends with an account of the destruction of the demon Tāraka by Kumāra, the son of the couple. *Bhaṭṭikāvya,* ascribed also to Bhartṛhari, is a work consisting of twenty-two cantos which describe the story of Rāma illustrating the forms of Sanskrit grammar. The *Kirātārjunīya* of Bhāravi, who is mentioned in an inscription of AD 634, along with Kālidāsa, is a *kāvya* abounding in richness of meaning. In eighteen cantos it describes the battle between Arjuna and Śiva disguised as a Kirāta. *Śiśupālavadha* of Māgha is a *kāvya* of extraordinary merit. It is famous for its three qualities: similes, richness of meaning and simplicity of diction. In twenty cantos the work describes the killing of Śiśupāla, the King of Cedi, by Kṛṣṇa. *Naiṣadhīyacarita* of Śrī Harṣa, in twenty-two cantos, deals with the story of Nala, the King of Niṣadha, and Damayantī, the daughter of King Bhīma. The episode is taken from the *Mahābhārata* and the author belongs to the twelfth century. Among the historical *kāvya*s Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* stands foremost. *Navasāhasāṅkacarita* of Padmagupta also deserves mention.

Prose Romance

The abundant use of lengthy compounds, vivid descriptions of nature, and long strings of similes and metaphors often teeming with puns are some of the most important characteristics of classical prose. The narrative portions are almost meagre. The high standards prescribed for prose writing render it difficult and only men of the calibre of Bāṇa and Daṇḍin could lay hands on it. There are two

notable work in this field in that it deals with divine love and indirectly hints at the relation of the supreme deity to the human soul.

Dramas

The sage Bharata is the mythical inventor of *nāṭaka* (drama). The chief characteristics of this dramatic form are: *(i) Vīra* or *Śṛṅgāra* should be the predominant sentiment, the others being subordinate to it. The last act should contain the sentiment of wonder. *(ii)* The hero should be one of the four types: *Dhīrodātta, Dhīroddhata, Dhīralalita* and *Dhīraśānta*. *(iii)* The plot must be either famous or imaginary, preference being given to the former. *(iv)* There should be five to ten acts in a play. Besides *nāṭaka* there are several other forms of dramatic representations such as *Prakaraṇa, Bhāṇa, Prahasana*, and others. The earliest forms of dramatic literature may be found in the Ṛgvedic dialogues such as those of Saramā and Paṇis, Yama and Yamī, Pururavas and Urvaśī. But the earliest references to acted dramas is found in the *Mahābhāṣya* where Kaṁsavadha and Bālibandha are mentioned.

Bhāsa is an earlier dramatist mentioned by Kālidāsa. Thirteen plays are ascribed to him the chief of which are *Svapnavāsavadatta, Ūrubhaṅga, Madhyamavyāyoga* and others. Many scholars question his authorship of the dramas. Kālidāsa is perhaps the greatest Sanskrit dramatist. His *Vikramorvaśīya* is a play in five acts describing the love of king Purūravas and Urvaśī, a celestial nymph. *Mālavikāgnimitra* in five acts describes the love between King Agnimitra and Mālavikā, a princess. *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* is the greatest of his dramas both in length and in merit. In seven acts the drama describes the love of King Duṣyanta for Śakuntalā, the daughter of Menakā. *Mṛcchakaṭika* of Śūdraka in ten acts is distinct from other plays in its dramatic qualities of vigour of life and action and its humour. The heroine of the play is a courtesan. Śri Harṣa is the author of three dramas. They are *Ratnāvalī*, describing the love of Udayana and Sāgarikā, *Nāgānanda*, a play with a Buddhistic colouring, and *Priyadarśikā*. Another important dramatist is Bhavabhūti with three dramas to his credit. His *Mālatīmādhava* is a *prakaraṇa* in ten acts, and his *Mahāvīracarita* derives its plot from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and, consists of seven acts. *Uttararāmacarita* is perhaps the greatest of his plays. The description of the love of Rāma for Sītā, purified by sorrow, is perhaps unique in Indian drama.

Viśākhadatta's *Mudrārākṣasa* is another unique play since it contains political intrigues. The hero is Candragupta, the founder of the Maurya dynasty. Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa's *Veṇīsaṁhāra* is a drama of considerable merit based on the *Mahābhārata*. Among other dramatists Rājaśekhara deserves mention. Four of his plays: *Viddhasālabhañjikā, Karpūramañjarī, Bālarāmāyaṇa* and *Bālabhārata* have survived. Among allegorical plays *Prabodhacandrodaya* of Krishna Miśra in six acts is important. Abstract notions such as religion, reason, and knowledge are personified as characters in this play. There are hundreds of dramas with varying merit produced in Sanskrit down to modern times.

Fables and Fairy Tales

Fairy tales and fables in classical Sanskrit literature are noteworthy for their didactical value. Ethical reflections and philosophical proverbs are the characteristics of the fables. It is often difficult to follow the main thread of the narrative for there are numerous stories inserted within the framework of the main story.

Pañcatantra of Viṣṇuśarman is perhaps the greatest didactical fable and it has been translated into almost every major language in the world. Probably the work was written for instructing some prince in moral values. Through these stories various human vices are exposed. *Hitopadeśa* is an old fable of doubtful authorship. It contains instructions in domestic and foreign policies. *Nītisāra* is a similar work dealing with the principles of polity.

Among various collections of fairy tales *Vetālapañcaviṁśati* of Jambhaladatta, where a goblin narrates twenty-five quizzical stories to King Vikramāditya, is interesting. *Siṁhāsanadvātriṁśikā* is a collection of thirty-two stories narrated to the king by images on the throne. Another collection is *Śukasaptati*, where a parrot narrates seventy stories to a separated wife in order to dissuade her from running after other men. The greatest of them all is *Kathāsaritsāgara* by Somadeva consisting of 124 *taraṅga*s divided into eighteen chapters. The work is based on Guṇāḍhya's *Bṛhat-Kathā* supposed to have been written in the Paiśācī language. *Bṛhat-Kathā* itself is not available and is known only through references by Bāṇa and Daṇḍin. Another important work based on it is the *Bṛhat-Kathāmañjarī* of Kṣemendra.

Commentaries on various books form a good division of Sanskrit literature. The greatest commentator was perhaps Mallinātha, a

Brāhmaṇa scholar who, besides writing other works, has commented on all the five *Mahākāvyas*. The growth of this branch of literature is evident from the fact that the *Kumārasaṁbhava* has more than twenty-two commentaries, while there are sixty-three on the *Meghadūta* and forty on the *Raghuvaṁśa*. This branch continues to flourish down to the present day.

Modern Period

It was the so-called discovery of Sanskrit in India that marked the dawn of linguistic study in a scientific manner. The formulation of the Indo-European family of languages was made possible by this revelation. Before the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta, Sir William Jones declared in 1786 :

> The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either; yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed that no philologer could examine them at all without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which perhaps no longer exists. There is similar reason, though not quite forcible, for supposing that both Gothic and Celtic, though blended with a different idiom, had the same origin with Sanskrit and the old Persian might be added to the same family.

Sanskrit had an Indo-European background and a close connection with the Central Asian region. The language gained an extra-Indian vogue through religion, philosophy, art and civilization spread over Central Asia, China, Cambodia, Siam and the Indonesian Archipelago. It brought a script and literature to South-East Asia where numerous Sanskrit inscriptions are found. In fact the foundations of Greater India were laid in this language. The role of Sanskrit in spreading Buddhism is known through translations into local languages, the originals of which seem to have been lost in India.

The role of Sanskrit as a symbol of national unity and the bond of an international friendship which comprehends Europe and most regions of Asia is significant. It rejuvenated with its infinite resources

local languages and cultures; absorbed local excellence and evolved a constructive and harmonious synthesis. It is a matter of gratification that Sanskrit still continues to be used as a medium of communication and literary expression through Indian audio-visual electronic media on a daily basis by means like news bulletins. In fact Sanskrit can still serve national interests of emotional and territorial integration which are relevant today more than ever.

2

The *Ādikāvya* and the Legacy of Ṛṣi Vālmīki

R. P. Goldman

कूजन्तं राम रामेति मधुरं मधुराक्षरम्।
आरुह्य कविताशाखां वन्दे वाल्मीकिकोकिलम्।।
वाल्मीकेर्मुनिसिंहस्य कवितावनचारिणः।
शृण्वन्रामकथानादं को न याति परां गतिम्।।
यः पिबन्सततं रामचरितामृतसागरम्।
अतृप्तस्तं मुनिं वन्दे प्राचेतसमकल्मषम्।।

I pay homage to the *koil,* Vālmīki who, having ascended
the tree of poetry, perches there sweetly warbling the
sweet song, "Rāma, Rāma!"
For who, having once heard the tale of Rāma, the roar
of Vālmīki, lion among sages, who ranges the woodlands
of poetry, would not attain the highest bliss?
So I pay homage to that blameless sage Prācetasa, who
drinks incessantly from the ocean of the nectar of the tale
of Rāma, and yet is never sated.

The past decade has witnessed something of a revival within the western Indological community of scholarly interest in the study of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in many of the innumerable forms in which it has

enriched the arts, letters, folk-cultures and devotional traditions of South and Southeast Asia for millennia.

Evidence for this can be found in such recent publications as the ongoing translation of the critical edition of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa;* Hart and Heifetz' translation of the *Araṇya Kāṇḍa* of Kampaṉ's *Irāmāvatāram;* monographs like Lutgendorf's *The Life of a Text: Performing the Rāmcaritmānas of Tulsidas,* van der Veer's *Gods on Earth,* Smith's *Rāmāyaṇa Traditions in Eastern India,* Brockington's *Righteous Rāma;* and edited volumes such as Richman's *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia* and Thiel-Horstmann's *Rāmāyaṇa and Rāmāyaṇas.*

During the same period the public's fascination with the epic tale of Śrī Rāma, always profound, was further enhanced by Doordarshan's broadcasts of Ramanand Sagar's enormously popular serial *Rāmāyaṇ* and its subsequent dissemination both in India and throughout the Indian diaspora in the form of video cassettes. Noteworthy here is the director's efforts to suggest that his version is some sort of amalgam of virtually all major regional literary versions of India.

One curious and recurrent thread in the fabric of recent *Rāmāyaṇa* studies has been the question of the alleged "privileging" of certain versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* over others. This is especially the case with respect to versions of the *Rāmakathā* that are regarded as literary rather than oral or "folk" renderings and which are represented as embodying elitist and regressive social values as opposed to allegedly "populist", "subaltern", or "feminist" retellings of the story.

In another context, the question of the authority of Vālmīki's rendering of the tale was raised during the course of the political conflict between various groups over whether Sagar's televised serialization should include episodes associated with the Ādikavi's *Uttarakāṇḍa* but absent from some other highly influential versions.

This trend in epic scholarship is a reflection of relatively recent developments in those branches of cultural studies that focus attention on relations of power in the areas of post-coloniality, subaltern studies, gender and so on. The intention here has been to allow the voices of less empowered sectors of society—construed as previously silenced—to be heard. These voices are represented as being in contestation to the more powerful and hegemonic voices of the traditional elites. This trend, I believe, is a healthy one for it

opens up to scholarly inquiry whole areas of humanistic research that had previously been overlooked, ignored or even despised.

Nonetheless, there are areas, and I believe that *Rāmāyaṇa* studies have been one of them, where, in their righteous zeal to highlight areas of cultural production that have hitherto been kept in the background, scholars have sometimes tended to inaccurately represent the nature and significance of what they describe as "elitist" renderings, and have perhaps drawn too sharp a distinction between these versions and the supposedly more "populist versions" that form the focus of their studies. This, in turn, has led to a certain unfortunate ambivalence towards Vālmīki's monumental creation.

Thus, for example, several authors in one of the collections mentioned above openly and repeatedly state their intention not to "privilege" Vālmīki. For, in the minds of many scholars whose research has been largely focused on what they view as "contestatory" *Rāmāyaṇas* produced by women, backward caste groups, folk poets and popular performers, the Ādikavi has been made into the virtual personification of precisely the sort of patriarchal, Brāhmaṇical, literate pan-Indian elitism that has become an object of scorn among many post-orientalist students of Indian culture.

This issue comes most clearly to the fore when such scholars attempt to summarize the *Rāmakathā* for their readers and find themselves—often reluctantly—forced to provide a synopsis of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* as the most "normative" version of the tale. Let me give a few examples. Paula Richman, in her introduction to the volume of *Rāmāyaṇa* studies she recently edited,[1] presents Vālmīki's version "not as an *Ur*-text but only as the story of Rāma with which the majority of Western Rāmāyaṇa scholars are most familiar. My goal is not to privilege Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* . . ." (p. 5). In the same collection the late Professor Ramanujan calls Vālmiki's version, "the earliest and most prestigious of them all" (p. 25). Frank Reynolds complains that, "The tendency unduly to privilege Hindu versions in general, and certain Hindu versions in particular, is evidenced by the common practice of referring to the various tellings of the Rāma story by the essentially Hindu term *Rāmāyaṇa*" (p. 60). Kathleen Erndl in her comparative study of Vālmīki's and Kampan̲'s treatments of the episode of the mutilation of Śūrpaṇakhā hastens to inform us that, "My intention is not to privilege it (Vālmīki's version) as the normative or *Ur*-text" (p. 68).

Other authors are similarly at pains to indicate that one element or another in the particular version they have chosen to study is not to be found in Vālmīki. Thus Professor Narayana Rao in his interesting study of women's *Rāmāyaṇa* songs from Andhra Pradesh writes of songs that "tell a *Rāmāyaṇa* story very different from the familiar one attribued to Vālmīki" (p. 114).

From these and similar comments scattered through much of recent *Rāmāyaṇa* scholarship one derives a sense that Vālmīki remains a kind of *éminence grise* for students of oral, folkloric, and "contestatory" versions of the tale, a ghostly presence whom, despite their best intentions, contemporary scholars cannot quite exorcise. Ironically it often seems that these same scholars do indeed "privilege" Vālmīki's poem despite their protestation. Moreover their scholarly comparisons of regional and folk *Rāmāyaṇa*s with the monumental epic of Vālmīki seem but poorly informed about the history, nature, substance, and even contents of the *Ādikavya*.

In the light of the recent resurgence in interest in *Rāmāyaṇa* studies I should like to speak up in defense of Vālmīki and his *Rāmāyaṇa* and try to contextualize this seminal version within the broader domain of the *Rāmakathā* and the vast scholarly and popular literature it has inspired.

It must at the outset be noted that the Ādikavi has not been without his defenders. Although it has become unfashionable to "privilege" a figure who has come to be regarded in some scholarly circles as a kind of poet-laureate of high caste, patriarchal, Brāhmaṇical culture—the culture of *varṇāśramadharma* as it is codified by authors such as Manu—some highly knowledgeable but non-academic writers have challenged the current trend in lay publications that are, perhaps, rarely read by professional Indologists.

One such writer, Ruth Vanita, in a recent issue of the well-known progressive women's journal *Manushi* offered a review of Professor Richman's collection, *Many Rāmāyaṇas,* mentioned above. Responding to several contributors to that volume who state their intention not to privilege certain Hindu versions of the epic story, Ms. Vanita remarks:

> In the process, however, they implicitly and explicitly privilege Buddhist and Jain over Hindu versions, oral over written versions,

> and so-called "people's" versions over texts attributable to an individual author. They have a general tendency to see the former in each of these pairs as more progressive, flexible and freedom-oriented.
>
> These preferences largely derive from the currently fashionable deconstructionist tendency for decanonisation. For instance, in their desire to "offset the prevalent attitudes to Valmiki", some contributors overlook the fact that this well-established prevalent attitude may have something to do with poetic excellence. To say that Valmiki's telling is merely "one among many" is to overlook the time factor—the earliest extant version is likely to have been more influential than later versions.
>
> Instead of viewing differences as representing polar opposites, . . . these differences could be seen as part of the tradition's self-reflexiveness. Overlooking this important feature of the tradition results in simplistic readings and in self-contradiction as, for instance, saying that "men labeled 'low-caste' . . . have created and maintained counter-Ramayanas", when Valmiki himself was a member of one of the "lowest" castes and is widely recognized as such by all castes. If the most privileged text was composed by a member of a low caste, then what were the "counter-Ramayanas" countering?[2]

Although Ms. Vanita's arguments are no doubt subject to a number of qualifications, she is certainly correct to call our attention to some of the positive reasons for the longevity, influence and unparalleled prestige of Vālmīki's poetic rendering of the Rāma story. One may object to the "privileging" of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa;* but one still has to account for it. The point here is that in very large measure the work comes by its privileged status honestly, not only through its reputation and hoary antiquity but through the general consensus on the part of its original audiences and the many generations that have followed them that the poem is outstanding, even unique, in its literary merit. For perhaps no other poet in the history of world literature has taken so vast and grand a theme, rendered it in an idiom that is both simple and noble, and imbued his rendering with greater pathos.

It was not Western scholars who conferred the title of Ādikavi on the Ṛṣi Vālmīki nor was it academicians who have seen to it that his masterwork genuinely lived up to its claim to be the परं कवीनामाधारम् the greatest source of inspiration for poets.

That status is confirmed by the greatest of India's poets and *alaṃkāraśāstrins*. For even the incomparable Kālidāsa confesses that he would not have dared undertake so awesome a theme as the history of the Raghu lineage were it not for the fact that the path had already been worn for him by the First Poet and his followers:

अथवा कृतवाग्द्वारे वंशेऽस्मिन्पूर्वसूरिभि:।
मणौ वज्रसमुत्कीर्णे सूत्रस्येवास्ति मे गति:।।[3]

On the other hand, there is a means of access for me, a passageway in the form of poetic language fashioned by the great poet-seers of old. It is like the passageway for a thread drilled through a gemstone with a diamond.

Even when the great authorities on poetics propose a new formulation to explain the essence of poetry, they take care to show that they do no differ from the intentions of the celebrated *ṛṣis* who composed the great epics of antiquity:

वाल्मीकिव्यासमुख्याश्च ये प्रख्याता: कवीश्वरा:।
तदभिप्रायबाह्योऽयं नास्माभिर्दर्शितो नय:।।[4]

No doctrine that we have expounded lies outside the scope of the intentions of the celebrated master poets beginning with Vālmīki and Vyāsa.

Nor is it the case that the prestige of Vālmīki was confined to poets of the elite Brāhmaṇical idiom of Sanskrit. It is not at all uncommon for authors composing in regional languages to explicitly cite the *ādikāvya* as their exemplar and its author their inspiration even when, as is often the case, they have evidently derived much of their thematic material from some other version. Thus, for example, Smith cites the claim of the Oriya poet Maheśvaradāsa in the latter's *Tīkā Rāmāyaṇa* to the effect that,

महाकबि बालमीक याहा पाइ धन्य।
प्राकृत भाषारे ताहा करिलि बर्णन।।

> I related in the Prākṛt language as much of Vālmīki as I deem excellent.[5]

Ms Vanita's comment on the "time factor" too must be taken seriously. One does not have to be a Sanskrit chauvinist to appreciate the fact that in the absence of serious merit in the arguements of those who have championed the *Mahābhārata's Rāmopākhyāna* and the Pali *Daśaratha Jātaka,* Vālmīki's monumental poem is the earliest version of the Rāma story of which we have knowledge. Although earlier and parallel versions of the tale have been hypothesized, we have no real evidence for such versions, and the failure to trace later regional and sectarian variants to such texts means that for all practical purposes we must accept the various recensions of Vālmīki as, in some sense, the ultimate *literary* source for all known versions.

This is not quite the same, however, as saying that Vālmīki's *mahākāvya,* orally composed and aurally consumed, is the original version of the story of Śrī Rāma. Indeed the poem itself, as it has come down to us, explicitly precludes such a notion. The tale of Rāma is after all not intended to be understood as a piece of fiction created from the fertile imagination of a poet, but rather a poetic rendering of historical events. The Ādikavi is himself represented as having been first the audience of a terse oral rendition of the tale of Rāma as told by *devarṣi* Nārada before rendering that vision, along with many incidents revealed to him through his newly acquired *pratibhā,* into the *ādikāvya:*

श्रुत्वा वस्तु समग्रं तद्धर्मात्मा धर्मसंहितम्।
व्यक्तमन्वेषते भूयो यद्वृत्तं तस्य धीमत:।।

> And so it came about that the righteous man, having learned the entire substance of that story, the tale of wise Rāma exemplary of righteousness, sought to make it public.[6]

In fact the entire thrust of the *upodghāta,* the prologue that precedes the narration of the story proper, is to show that Vālmīki's contribution is principally one of form not of content and that his creation, the *Rāmāyaṇa,* also called here the *Paulastyavadha* and the *Sītācarita,*[7] was an oral performative and musical piece which, in deriving its power from its unique sublimation of emotion into art and its ability to convey this emotively charged art through

performance to an audience distanced in time and space from the events it describes, became the original vehicle for the popular diffusion of the substance of Nārada's dry, purāṇic recitation:

> समाक्षरैश्चतुर्भिर्यः पादैर्गीतो महर्षिणा।
> सोऽनुव्याहरणाद्भूयः शोकः श्लोकत्वमागतः।।

> The *śoka*, grief, that the great seer sang out in four metrical quarters, all equal in syllables, has, by virtue of its being repeated after him, been transformed into *śloka*, poetry.[8]

As far as the question of the numerous differences—some subtle and some considerable, some literary and some sectarian—that distinguish one version of the tale from another, the following should be kept clearly in mind. Although it may be seen as transparently obvious to an Indian audience deeply steeped in the story of Śrī Rāma in at least one of its innumerable versions, it must constantly be stressed to the Western critic that Vālmīki's reputation does not at all rest on his having created the Rāma story but on his having transformed a historical tale that—however uplifting and inspiring it may be—is merely a chronicle of events, into a work of poetry and of music, that appeals as powerfully to the senses and the emotions as to the intellectual and spiritual faculties. In discussing the Andhra Brāhmaṇa women, who incidentally feel that Vālmīki's account of the events in the lives of Rāma and Sītā is not necessarily the "correct" one, Professor Narayana Rao has observed that,

> Like most of the participants in the tradition, these women believe the *Rāmāyaṇa* to be fact and not fiction, and its many different versions are precisely in keeping with this belief. Contrary to the usual opinion, it is fiction that has only one version; a factual event will inevitably have various versions, depending on the attitude, point of view, intent, and social position of the teller.[9]

This question of the often considerable diversity in the renderings of the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is indeed an interesting one and one that occupied the attention of both traditionalists and modern scholars. Where the latter have generally attempted to explain the variations on the basis of stemmatic structures deriving from lost non-Vālmīkian versions, the former have tended to rely on an equally

schematic model, that of the recurrence of the same historical events with relatively minor variations over the unimaginably long cycle of the *kalpas*. This last notion is perhaps most simply put in the *Ānandarāmāyaṇa:*

> पुनः पुनः कल्पभेदाज्जाताः श्रीराघवस्य च।
> अवताराः कोटिशोऽत्र तेषु भेदाः क्वचित् क्वचित्।।[10]

> Since, in course of the different eons, tens of millions of incarnations of Śrī Rāghava are born, naturally there are, here and there, some differences among them.

This idea is perhaps nowhere as charmingly stated as in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* where Sītā, in pressing Rāma to allow her to accompany him into exile, uses the unanimity among *Rāmāyaṇa* versions on at least this point as a powerful culminating argument:

> अन्यत्किञ्चित्प्रवक्ष्यामि श्रुत्वा मां नय काननम्।
> रामायणानि बहुशः श्रुतानि बहुभिर्द्विजैः।
> सीतां विना वनं रामो गतः किं कुत्रचिद्वद।।

> I'll tell you something else, and once you have heard it you will have to take me to the wilderness. Many Brahmans have heard many *Rāmāyaṇas*. Now tell me, in any of them does Rāma ever go to the forest without Sītā?[11]

Nonetheless, despite the importance of the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s diversity as a mechanism for both enriching and binding together disparate regional, social, sectarian and cultural communities during the course of its long history, there are a number of ways in which Vālmīki's poem—which itself has come down to us in a complex matrix of recensional diversity—merits both its supposedly "privileged" status and greater rather than less attention on the part of scholars interested in *Rāmāyaṇa* studies.

For a close and careful reading of the great epic of Vālmīki, together with the study of the massive and growing corpus of secondary literature the *Rāmāyaṇa* has engendered,[12] suggests that in at least three significant areas scholarship on the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* has tended to overlook critically important aspects of the work.

These areas—literary genre, textual history, and religious orientation—are closely interconnected. They can, however, be discussed separately.

The first of these areas, that of the exact literary genre and status of the poem has been often subject to misunderstanding on the part of younger scholars. In their enthusiasm for one or another of the various and undeniably interesting oral and performative *Rāmāyaṇa*s found in India ard Southeast Asia, whether they be Telugu women's songs, the great Rāmlilas of Rāmnagar, the Cendubhāgavatam of Andhra Pradesh, or the shadow puppet plays of Kerala or Indonesia, they have tended—unreflectingly, I feel—to too sharply contrast these oral and performative versions with what they style as Vālmīki's "literary" version.

The distinction between "oral" and "performative" on the one hand and "literary" on the other is at best a difficult one to make with reference to traditional Indian poetry; for it is all to a large extent performative and was generally intended to be consumed either aurally *(śravyakāvya)* or both aurally and visually *(dṛśyakāvya)*. Rarely was it intended—as the Latinate word "literature" suggests—to be consumed visually from a written or printed page.

But what is implicit in even the most highly "literary" renderings of the *Rāmakathā*, works like the *Raghuvaṁśa* or the *Uttararāmacarita*, is in fact highly explicit in the great poem of Vālmīki. For his *Rāmāyaṇa* is not only the model and inspiration for poets: it is, according to the tradition recorded in the work itself, the archetype of orally composed and transmitted poetry. It was, moreover, specifically designed to be presented as a musical performance and consumed aurally and perhaps even visually by its audiences.

As the well-known *upodghāta* or prologue to the poem makes clear, the *Rāmāyaṇa* was from its very beginning, or oral composition, designed to be sung to a musical accompaniment. Just as Vālmīki's seminal curse assumes a musical form so does his completed poem:

पादबद्धोऽक्षरसमस्तन्त्रीलयसमन्वितः।

(It was) divided into metric quarters, equal in syllables, and suitable for the accompaniment of melodic and rhythmic instruments.[13]

As taught to its legendary first performers, the singers Lava and Kuśa, and as performed by them, the epic is described with minute attention to the technical vocabulary of classical Indian vocal music:

पाठ्ये गेये च मधुरं प्रमाणैस्त्रिभिरन्वितं।
जातिभि: सप्तभिर्युक्तं तन्त्रीलयसमन्वितम्।।

It is sweet both when recited and when sung in the three tempos to the seven notes of the scale; and it is suitable for the accompaniment of melodic and rhythmic instruments.[14]

It is also noteworthy that along with the vocabulary of classical music we find, in the description of the performative quality of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, one of the earliest uses in a poetic text of the technical terminology of traditional theatrical performance as promulgated in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata Muni:

रसै: शृङ्गारकरुणहास्यरौद्रभयानकै:।
वीरादिभी रसैर्युक्तं काव्यमेतदगायताम्।।

The two of them sang the poem, which is replete with all the poetic sentiments: the humorous, the erotic, the piteous, the wrathful, the heroic, the terrifying, the loathsome, and the rest.[15]

These *rasa*s—it should be kept in mind—are most fully conveyed not merely by the expressive singing of well wrought verse (i.e. aurally consumed) but also especially visually through dramatic representation, such as the *abhinaya* etc. of classical drama.

I suspect indeed, that some element of visual representation, whether through painted scenes, mime, or some form of *tableaux vivants* (cf.the *jhānkī* of Rāmlīlā and other forms of popular theatre), may have been present in the earliest performances of *Rāmāyaṇa*, may well be suggested in the *upodghāta* itself.

Let us recall that according to the *upodghāta* among the very first audiences of the *Rāmāyaṇa* were a group of seers *(ṛṣis)* who were associated from Vedic times with special kinds of aural and visual capacities.[16] Deeply moved by the sweet singing of the bards the seers add a visual element to the auditory sensation that they feel.

Marvelling at the brilliance of the twins' performance they cry:

अहो गीतस्य माधुर्यं श्लोकानां च विशेषतः।
चिरनिर्वृत्तमप्येतत्प्रत्यक्षमिव दर्शितम्।।

Ah! How sweet is the singing and especially the *śloka*s! Even though this all took place so long ago, it seems to be happening right before our very eyes.[17]

Important here is not only the fact of visual representation, but of the sense of direct realization that it engenders; of a profound emotional conviction that one is seeing not merely a *representation* of past events but is witnessing and indeed participating in the actual events themselves.[18]

This sense of immediacy, of the reality of the past in the present, will later become a central feature of artistic representation in traditional India; nowhere more consistently than in dramatic representations of the *Rāmakathā.*

Nowhere, perhaps, is this theme developed more fully towards the limits of its emotive power than in the *Uttararāmacarita,* the poet-playwright Bhavabhūti's wrenching dramatic meditation on the closing book of Vālmīki's poem. Here too, when characters witness representation, whether painted or dramatically portrayed, of the emotionally charged scenes of their own past, they erase the intervening years and react in ways appropriate not to the present reality but the more powerful reality of the representation.

Thus, when Sītā views her own wedding portrait she exclaims, in what constitutes almost a refrain of the play and a powerful reminder of the experience of the seers who constitute Lava and Kuśa's first audience:

अम्मो जाणामि तस्सिं जेव्व पदेसे तस्सिं जेव्व काले वत्तामि

Oh, I feel as though I am in that same place and time again.[19]

Or, beholding a likeness of the *rākṣasī* Śūrpaṇakhā, she cries out:

हा अज्जउत्त दे दंसणम् एत्तिअं

Alas, my lord, I shall see you no more![20]

But even as Rāma seeks to reassure her that this is just a representation, he begins to expericence the very same feelings himself:

हन्त वर्तमान इव मे जनस्थानवृतान्तः प्रतिभाति

Ah! It seems as if the events that took place in Janasthāna were happening in the present.[21]

Then, seeing a scene of Mt. Prasravaṇa and hearing Lakṣmaṇa begin to describe his grief there, Rāma cuts him short crying:

प्रत्यावृत्तः पुनरिव स मे जानकीविप्रयोगः

My separation from Jānakī seems to be happening again.[22]

Bhavabhūti is merely playing variations on a central theme that is first articulated by Vālmīki. Poetic performance of moving events is a means to the direct (*pratyakṣa*) visualization and experience of these emotions in a highly sublimated form that is both aesthetically satisfying and spiritually uplifting. This is, after all the essence of *rasadhvani* as it is first set forth by Bharata Muni and later scientifically expounded by Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta.

Thus we see that for all of the poetic artifice and skill of Vālmīki, his poem is in essence an oral-performative piece composed and performed for the popular audiences of his day. Scholars of more modern, regional versions of the Rāma story should not, just because Vālmīki composed in Sanskrit, make the mistake of anachronistically believing that he intended his poem for elite courtly and Brahmāṇical audiences only, that is for the royal and priestly upholders of patriarchy and casteism. It was a very different thing to compose in Sanskrit in the eighth or ninth century BC when forms of Old Indic were doubtless current among a wide spectrum of north Indian society than it was, say, in the sixteenth century AD when the language had come to be largely restricted to the elite

worlds of liturgy, royal inscription, courtly literature, and *śāstraic* scholarship.

So, far from placing Vālmīki's work at the opposite end of a literary spectrum from the popular, oral and performative *Rāmāyaṇas* scholars might do well to see the poem as the ancient precursor and generic prototype of Indian oral-epic composition. It is not because of the dominance of social and ritual elites that the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* has continued to be enjoyed to the present-day in its original language despite its many retellings in all the languages of the subcontinent. It has survived because of the genius of the Ādikavi which has rightfully lent his work the immense prestige and popularity it has conferred upon his poem.

The areas of textual history and religious orientation are closely connected. Here the misunderstandings with respect to the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* originated not with contemporary scholars of oral poetry or subaltern history but with the great European philologists who first took up the study of Indian literature in earnest in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, despite the evidence constituted by the critical edition of the poem and the theoretical advances in cultural studies made in the past several years, many of these misunderstandings continue to be held by many contemporary students of the Indian epics.

A significant element in the scholarly project of the early philologists was their relentless effort to use the tools of textual criticism to pare the vast and complex Indian epics back to the simple bardic heroic tales they were certain must have been their original forms. This theory, articulated by scholars such as Jacobi held that the *Rāmāyaṇa* as we know it must have grown over a period of centuries or even millennia from genealogical ballads composed and sung by courtly bards into the vast, complex, and monumental poem we have today.[23] Starting from an alien aesthetic representing itself as "higher criticism", scholars expended much effort and ingenuity on determining which passages of the poem were spurious and which genuine. Little attention was paid to the important indigenous critique of the *Rāmāyaṇa* recorded in the copious and learned Sanskrit commentaries on the poem and little effort was made to read or understand the work in the light of the aesthetic, social and religious norms of Indian culture.

An important corollary of this school of criticism is that the epic hero Rāma, who is known throughout the Hindu tradition as an

avatāra of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, was not, at the level of the theoretically reconstructable "ur-text" of the poem, even regarded as a divinity. According to the proponents of this widely accepted line of thought, the hero came to be identified with Viṣṇu only in the course of time as the result of a proposed progressive Vaiṣṇava sectarian appropriation of the epics.[24] Often these two areas of inquiry—the philological and the theological—have been so closely joined in scholars' assertions that it is precisely those portions of the epic texts in which the divinity of these figures is most explicit that we must therefore regard as later additions or interpolations. Thus every Western student of traditional India down to the present-day is taught to take for granted Jacobi's dictum that the *Bāla-* and *Uttarakāṇḍas* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are late appendices to the poem despite the fact that, even after the completion of critical editions here at the Oriental Institute, absolutely no convincing text-historical evidence for the extraneous character of these sections has ever been adduced.[25]

Sheldon Pollock, the translator of the *Ayodhyā-* and *Araṇyakāṇḍas* of the critical edition has powerfully demonstrated in the case of the Rāmāvatāra[26] what Sukthankar argued so passionately in the case of the *Mahābhārata*'s Kṛṣṇāvatāra[27] and what has always formed an integral part of traditional India's reception of the epics, *viz.*, that the Western notion that these poems recognize these heroes as incarnations of God only in their late strata is without textual support and is, moreover, based upon fundamental misunderstandings of the conception, treatment and representation of divinity in Vaiṣṇava Hinduism.

As Pollock has suggested, scholars' failure to recognize the divinity of Rāma in Books 2-6 of the epic is in large measure due to the subtlety of Vālmīki as a poet. The theory of the Vaiṣṇava *avatāra*, most particularly as it is conditioned by Brahmā's boon to Rāvaṇa, requires that the God become man must experience the human condition to the fullest. Thus he must not explicitly acknowledge or even always recognize his divine nature.

This theme is filled with powerful ironies and fruitful ambiguities and it is the genius of Vālmīki that he tunes his poetry to them, now revealing now concealing the divine nature of the hero, showing him now prey to despair at the loss of his beloved wife and now in the grip of a rage that can shatter the universe, depicting him as a lord of the world who nonetheless may need, occasionally to be reminded of his power.

Many later poets of the *Rāmāyaṇa* theme, poets of the stature of Tulsīdās, have retold the story as a vehicle for a profound *Rāmabhakti* that minimized the human quality of the *avatāra*. However the fact that as a poet Vālmīki chose to explore the fullness of the *rasa*s derived from the all too human emotions such as grief (*karuṇā*), rather than constantly foreground the omnipotence and omniscience of his hero, does not mean that any part of his work regards Rāma as a mere man. On the contrary it is a tribute to the skill and subtlety of the poet.

The *bhakti* model in its fully developed schemata tends often to undercut the irony of recognition so central to the vision of Vālmīki. The authors of other, more devotionally oriented, versions of these tales assume, after all, the divinity and Vaiṣṇava identity of Rāma as do most of their characters. In works such as *Rāmacaritmānas* and the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*,[28] all the characters including the epic antagonist are fully aware of the divinity and salvific power of their foe. Tulsīdās' *rākṣasa* warriors are shown as eager to be slain in battle by Rāma for they know he is God and that such a death will take them straight to his heaven. Even the evil Rāvaṇa is frequently depicted as the greatest of devotees since his unremitting hatred—in the form of *dveṣabhakti*—is one of the purest forms of mental and emotional concentration upon the godhead.[29] Rāma himself, far from being generally unaware of his true nature, is often shown to know the entire epic plot in advance, submitting to its vagaries only for the sake of his *līlā*.[30] Such texts have clearly sacrificed a certain narrative tension for a heightened experience of the powerful emotive transport, the consuming *bhāva*, of *bhakti;* but it does not follow from this that Vālmīki was unaware of the divinity of his hero and the demonic nature of his foes. On the contrary, Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* in every one of its known recensions clearly presupposes the divinity of its hero and the poet clearly intended and understood his story to have cosmic as well as purely historical significance.[31]

In conclusion I should like to acknowledge the debt the scholarly world owes to the long and devoted labours of the scholars and administrators of the Oriental Institute who have placed before us the extremely valuable critical edition of Vālmīki's timeless epic and also to the great *ṛṣi* himself whose work has few equals in world literature for gravity, beauty, nobility, and pathos. It has become one of the fundamental texts for many of the cultures of Asia and I must say its study has afforded me many of the happiest and most stimulating hours of my life.

Although the poem is very ancient, it still holds much for scholars and *rasika*s to explore and I would like close with an appeal to my scholarly colleagues and the general reader to take a fresh look at this venerable text before making judgements about the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition as a whole. It is not mere accident that has kept this poem alive for nearly three thousand years and it behoves us to study the text carefully in order to fully understand why Brahmā's extraordinary promise to Vālmīki has proven so true:

यावत्स्थास्यन्ति गिरय: सरितश्च महीतले।
तावद्रामायणकथा लोकेषु प्रचरिष्यति।।
यावद्रामस्य च कथा त्वत्कृता प्रचरिष्यति।
तावदूर्ध्वमधश्च त्वं मल्लोकेषु निवत्स्यसि।।

As long as the mountains and rivers shall endure upon the earth, so long shall the Tale of the *Rāmāyaṇa* be told among the people.

As long as the tale of Rāma which you have created shall be told, so long shall you remain immortal in my worlds above and below.[32]

References

1. Paula Richman, ed., *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991.
2. Ruth Vanita, "We Make it Better", *Manushi*, No. 78. Sept-Oct. 1993, p. 37.
3. *ṚV*, 1.4. It is worth noting that the commentator Mallinātha remarks here: "*pūrvaiḥ sūribhiḥ kavibhiḥ vālmīkādibhiḥ* । *kṛtavāgdvāre kṛtaṃ rāmāyaṇādi-prabandharūpā yā vāk saiva dvāraṃ praveśo yasya tasmin* ।
4. Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka* 3.19 *(kārikā)*.
5. W. L. Smith, 1988:51.
6. *Rām.*, 1.3.1
7. *Rām.*, 1.4.6 and note at loc. in Goldman, 1985:286.
8. *Rām.*, 1.2.39.
9. V. Narayana Rao, "A Rāmāyaṇa of Their Own: Women's Oral Tradition in Telugu," in *Many Rāmāyaṇas*, 1992, p. 115.
10. *Ānandarāmāyaṇa* 10.7.29 cited in Smith, 1988:12.
11. *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* 2.4.77-78. Cited in Smith 1988:11.
12. See for example *A Critical Inventory of Rāmāyaṇa Studies in the World*, published by Sahitya Akademi (1991) whose first volume, dealing only with works in English and Indian Languages contains more than 500 pages of entries.

13. *Rām*, 1.2.17.
14. *Rām*, 1.4.7.
15. *Rām*, 1.4.8.
16. Thus the Vedic texts that were revealed to them are known collectively as *śruti*, "that which is heard" while the seers themselves are often referred to as *draṣṭārah*, literally "those who see".
17. *Rām*, 1.4.6.
18. For a more detailed discussion of this theme in the *Uttararāmacarita* and Bhāsa's *Svapnavāsavadattam*, see R. P. Goldman, "The Serpent and the Rope on Stage: Popular, Literary, and Philosophical Representation of Reality in Traditional India", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* Vol. 14, 1986, pp. 319-69.
19. *Uttararāmacaritam with the Commentary of Ghanaśyāma with Notes and Introduction* by Mahāmahopādhyāya P. V. Kane, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1962. Act I after, v. 17 (p. 13).
20. Kane, 1962, Act I after, v. 27 (p. 18).
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. For examples of this type of scholarship, see Hopkins, 1901 and Jacobi, 1893. The hegemonic power of this received wisdom is compelling and I myself, although skeptical about specific formulations, was like most Western-trained Indologists originally inclined to accept it as axiomatic.
24. Muir 1873, van Daalen 1980:139, Sukthankar 1957, esp.. Chapters 1 and 4.
25. Now to be sure, a variety of textual and historical evidence has been cited in support of these hypotheses. There is, for example, the often noticed reference in the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* (3.4.4) which speaks of a *Bhārata* epic of some 24,000 verses. Also, it might be noted, the epic stories and heroes are common cultural property in South (not to mention Southeast) Asia so that numerous non-Hindu versions of the tales appear in Buddhist and Jaina texts as well as in other sources where the notion of *avatāra*-hood may be downplayed, ignored, or even ridiculed. Nonetheless, no manuscript of either epic is known to omit these sections while passages dealing centrally with the divinity of the heroes often demonstrate unusually consistent manuscript support. In many cases, widely accepted arguments alleging inconsistencies and even contradictions between these supposed interpolations and the "epic cores" prove, on close examination, to be ill-founded. For example, on Jacobi's assertions concerning the lateness of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, see Goldman, 1984:60-67. For a discussion of the use of detailed metrical analysis as a potential tool for isolating various text-historical strata of the epic. see Ingalls and Ingalls, 1985; and Smith, 1972.
26. Pollock, 1991:15-54.
27. Sukthankar, 1957.
28. For further references and a discussion of the influences of *bhakti* on the *Rāmāyaṇa*, see Smith 1988:100-104.
29. For and examination of the theme of *dveṣabhakti*, see Smith 1988:113-21.
30. Cf. *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* and Tulsi's handling of Sītā's abduction. Rāma informs Sītā in advance of the event and instructs her, as the Goddess, to

withdraw into hiding and leave a simulacrum in her place (Smith 1988:92-93), or *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*'s discussion of the *gopīs*' full knowledge of the divinity of Kṛṣṇa (*BhāgP*, 10.22.14; 10.29.31). In some instances, however, the *gopīs* see Kṛṣṇa as only a mortal (10.29.12).

31. Thus the *Mahābhārata*'s tale entirely revolves around the notion of *avatāra*. As detailed in its early sections all of the poem's characters, on both sides of the conflict, are the earthly incarnations of divine or demonic forces who carry the eternal struggle between the *devas* and the *asuras* into a historical place on behalf of the overburdened earth. On this, see Hiltebeitel: 1984. This point is even clearer in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, for although its heroes, like those of the *Mahābhārata* are *avatāras*, its villains are not. Instead they are unmodified *rākṣasas* whose titanic leader, cast in the mould of the great Purāṇic *asuras*, cannot be successfully confronted by a mere human. On this, see Pollock, 1991:29-43.
32. *Rām*, 1.2.35-36.

3

Poetry of the *Mahābhārata*

Satya Pal Narang

One of the great epics of India, the *Mahābhārata* attributed to the sage Vyāsa is important not only for its rich cultural material and thought, but has also been inspiring poetry both in its contents and expressions from the very beginning.

Paying tribute to the poetry of the *Mahābhārata*, Bāṇa has accepted it as a test of a poet with regard to descriptions and all-pervasiveness.[1] The same poet recognizes Vyāsa as an omniscient creator of poetry.[2] Vijjikā, a poetess of the medieval ages, recognizes only Brahmā, Vyāsa and Vālmīki as poets and rejects all the later poets and prose-writers.

Authorship

According to Winternitz:[3] "It is attributed to the great sage Vyāsa who is conceived to be the grandfather and contemporary person of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. He imparted it to his pupil Vaiśampāyana which was recited by him in the intervals of the great snake-sacrifice of King Janamejaya. The *sūta* Ugraśravas told the story which he heard from Vaiśampāyana in a recast and enlarged version."

But in its final stages from *Jaya* to *Bhārata* and *Bhārata* to the *Mahābhārata*, a band of poets and thinkers from various regions, and trained in various disciplines, including recitation in various styles,

tried to incorporate all the current thoughts and stories to make it more than an encyclopaedia. Anonymous verses attributed to Vyāsa, compared with the extent of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*, show that a number of verses are not authentic although collected in his name. A number of poems and scattered verses written in the style of later classical Sanskrit may also not be the original verses of the *Mahābhārata*.

Background of the Poetry

The poetry of the *Mahābhārata* had a developed background of Vedic literature where a number of styles of expression along with mythological and legendary figures had already evolved. The names of *ṛṣis* like Vasiṣṭha, Aṅgiras, Bhṛgus, Atri, and Tṛta also point to the Vedic background. According to Hopkins,[4] the recited stories are recognized in the *Mahābhārata*. The story-tellers sit and talk of the "glorious deeds of old and many other tales", or, as it is expressed elsewhere, "tales of war and moil and genealogies of seers and gods". There are genealogical verses; memorial stanzas in honour of the family; hero-praising verses; congratulations that utter the praise of the Kuru race. Thus it happens that legends of gods, mythological narratives of Brāhmaṇical origin, and to a great extent even didactic sections referring to Brāhmaṇical philosophy, ethics and law, were received into the *Mahābhārata*.[5] Other Vedic stories like those of Indra and Vṛtra, Prajāpati, Brahmā, Manas, Aśvin and Aditi etc. are found in one or another form in the *Mahābhārata*.[6] A few Vedic deities might have changed into human characters in the *Mahābhārata*.[7] There are a number of objects which are used as similes including the sacrificial objects *(yajña)* and fire[8] which might have been borrowed in the *Mahābhārata*. According to Warder, "There are a few prose narratives in *ākhyāna* . . . . . The main story of the Great Epic is *ākhyāna* . . . . The later Vedic texts refer already to *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* . . . . Their tradition was evidently oral and fluid and reflected changing fashions until at last they were written down well after the beginning of the kāvya period."[9]

Poetry

The *Mahābhārata* inherited the serious tradition of Vedic poetry and the simple and spontaneous poetry of the *Mahābhārata* was transmitted generation to generation by the *sūtas* who recited or sang it not only at folk-gatherings but also in temples and on

festivals. Later, the worshippers or reciters of the *Mahābhārata* in the temples and the professionals in this art might have developed it in their regional idiom and enhanced the contents. Hopkins[10] has attached it with various professionals and remarks, "It was originally recited by *Kuśīlavas*, *Kathakas* and the *Vaitālikas* besides other epic professional *māgadhas*, *nāndivādyas*, *bandins*, *gāyanas*, *saukhyaśāyikas*, *vaitālikas*, *kathakas*, *granthikas*, *gāthins*, *kuśīlavas* and *paurāṇikas*. These songs were sung either with lyres or with hand clapping." The mode of reciters exhibits that its popularity in recitation had a place in social, royal, religious, legendary, dramatic and folk spheres of life.

The remarks of Hopkins have further importance with regard to the method of narration of the *Mahābhārata*. He thinks that the epic story is that of the old priestly legend, where the verse-tale is knitted together, as in the epic, by prose statements as to the speaker. So in the epic, a narrative, not a rhapsodic or dramatic, delivery is indicated by such phrases.

They probably took the epic legends and arranged them in order for the popular recitation, which is recognized when priests recite the *Mahābhārata* at the assemblies of warriors. In its final form it is not a pure form of heroic poetry but an amalgam of heroic, theological, moralistic and legendary genres. In traditional criticism, it is declared as a compendium of the *Dharma, Artha, Kāma* and the *Mokṣa*.

In terms of traditional criticism, due to its simple and elegant style, the *Mahābhārata* may be classed in the Vaidarbhī *rīti*. The complicated compounds which became a test for later prose-writers are absent from its language. Of course, there is a formula poetry which is related to arrival, departure, passage of time, falling in love, change of season and religious poetry which is not only the idiom of the *Mahābhārata* but of epics in general including a few *Purāṇas*. A salient feature of the *Mahābhārata* is the flow of language which does not know the barrier of the artificial contents although the *Mahābhārata* itself presents many hard-nuts to crack (*kūṭaślokas*).

Figures of Speech

Although a few observations about figures of speech are given by Hopkins regarding the *Mahābhārata*, Professor R. K. Sharma[11]

has analysed them in detail. The works on poetics frequently quote the *Mahābhārata* not only for figures of speech but also for varieties of *Dhvani* or suggestion.

Anuprāsa or alliteration is frequently found in the *Mahābhārata* and constitutes an element of musical diction. *Yamaka* is found particularly in the *kūṭaślokas* of the verses. Natural *śleṣa* is also frequently visible.

The similes of the *Mahābhārata* are taken from various phases of mythology and from natural phenomena; including the sun, fire, moon, planets, comets, earth etc. Other objects used for similes are supernatural appearances; philosophical terms and concepts; animals like cows, bulls, horses, elephants, lions, tigers, snakes and others; birds, insects, forests, trees and plants; the lotus, the aristocrat, metals, and jewels. Various aspects of human life include the man in the street, social habits, courts, prostitutes, *varṇa-vyavasthā*, material culture including philosophical and ethical values. The similes of the *Mahābhārata* are very natural, apt, forceful and expressive. There is less of a craze to exhibit intellectualism like in later Sanskrit literature.

Professor Sharma has accepted *utprekṣās* with regards to verbs, nouns and adjectives; *rūpakas*: both simple and complex; *atiśayokti* or hyperbole, *arthāpatti, virodha, parisaṁkhyā, vyatireka, pratīpa, saṁdeha, bhrāntimān, tulyayogitā, sahokti, kāvyaliṅga, svabhāvokti, viṣama* and *samāsokti*.[12] By the application of the definitions of classical Sanskrit criticism, one can find all the figures of speech in this encyclopaedic poem. But the definitions of these figures were certainly less known to the poet Vyāsa.

Metres

For the battlefields and in general, the metre found in the *Mahābhārata* is *anuṣṭubh*, the simplest metre with a larger number of structures. Hopkins fully analyzed this topic and his observations are as follows:

> The metres found in the *Mahābhārata* which correspond to the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the classical structure of metres are the *upajātis* and their components; *vaiśvadevī, bhujaṅgaprayāta, rucirā, praharṣiṇī, vasantatilakā* and *mālinī*. The metres exclusively found in the *Mahābhārata* are *śālinī, drutavilambita, rathoddhatā* and *śārdūlavikrīḍita*. The probability of introduction of these metres in

the *Mahābhārata* due to the impact of the classical style of poetry cannot be ruled out.

The structure and varieties of metres are very useful for studying the development of the *Mahābhārata*, particularly the evaluation of the critical edition afresh. Warder appreciates them as new regional and musical metres. In the opinion of Hopkins, "the different possibilities concern us here only as they affect the cadence, for the monotony of the *pāda* is varied quite as much by the rhetorical cadence as by the foot which is different from the Vedic metre in structure."

A number of metres and their varieties unknown in classical Sanskrit are found in the *Mahābhārata*. There are a number of hypermetres or double hypermetres which really constitute the original character of the epic metres and a number of varieties.

Rasas

The *Mahābhārata* dominantly consists of verses having heroic poetry. The main *rasa* of the *Mahābhārata* is the *vīra rasa*, but if we apply the intricacies of classical Sanskrit criticism, almost all the *rasas* can be extracted from it. The blends of various *rasas* are also illustrated by rhetoricians with verses from the *Mahābhārata*.

Viśvanātha, quite in agreement with Ānandavardhana and Mammaṭa, quotes the following passage from the *Mahābhārata* as an example of *arthaśaktyudbhava dhvani:*

> *alam sthitvā, śmaśāne' smin gṛdhragomāyusaṅkule* ।
> *kaṅkālabahule ghore sarvaprāṇibhayaṅkare* ।।

Śānta: Ānandavardhana seems to have had the *Mahābhārata* in his mind while writing the *Dhvanyāloka*. As a *kāvya*, he accepts the sentiment of quietism *(śānta rasa)* as dominant. He has clearly explained that the main purpose of the *Mahābhārata* is to delineate *śānta* as the predominant *rasa* along with other subordinate *rasas*. Raghavan (Number of *Rasas*) presents the views of Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, Kṣemendra, and the author of the *Bhāgavata* that the *Mahābhārata* is essentially and primarily a work (*prabandhakāvya*) of the sentiment of tranquillity (*śānta rasa*).

Raudra: Vyāsa is a pastmaster in handling inimical sentiments and maintains perfect harmony in their delineation. Here we first

observe the rise of pathos and then its fall and then the rise of the furious sentiment—*raudra.* Vyāsa showed his artistic skill to maintain harmony even among inimical and diametrically opposed sentiments and feelings.

Pathetic: It is not only a dominant sentiment here but according to Hopkins, "there is a distinct attempt at pathetic repetitions".

Humour and Satire: Satirical verses are found in the expressions of the kings for the enemies but Ingalls accepts the *Virāṭa-Parvan* as essentially a comedy.

Language

Generally the language of the *Mahābhārata* is definitely not influenced by the grammar of Pāṇini. It is the language of an intellectual (*prājña*) and an ignorant (*ajña*) person which notwithstanding having a musical character is free from artificial bondages including embellishment and grammar. The vast extent of variants in the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* indicate to its popularity of expressions and a character of spoken Sanskrit. *Mahābhārata* itself declares that "it is just like the sound of the cuckoo and after listening to it the other sounds are like those of crows": *puṁskokilagiraṁ śrutvā rukṣadhvāṅkṣasya vāgiva.* About the emotional character of the language of the *Mahābhārata,* Professor Sharma remarks:

> By nature, a community's emotional language of lamentation, honor, anger, wonder etc., is what we call poetic in the real sense of the term. We can always hear for example, the so-called elements of alliteration, reptition, introduction, refrain, rhythm, rhyme and allegory, even in the language of lamentation of an illiterate village woman.

But the number of difficult verses in the form of riddles is also not less. The *Mahābhārata* declares itself:

aṣṭau ślokasahasrāṇi aṣṭau ślokaśatāni ca
ahaṁ vedmi śuko vetti sañjayo vetti vā na vā

A number of sections may be classed as pretext-*kāvya*. Sanskrit rhetoricians have recognized it as a *prabandha-kāvya* particularly in the context of the *Gomāyu-Gṛdhra-saṁvāda* where popular poetry

expresses the deepest intention and sense of the context by one or the other pretext of the language.

Phrases and Idioms

Hopkins followed by Sharma has collected a number of idioms which are found either exclusively in the *Mahābhārata* or in the epics and the *Purāṇas* in general. A few of them are as follows:

> *anayad yamasādanam* for death; *āśīviṣa iva kruddhaḥ* (angry like a serpent with venom); *indradhvaja ivoccharitaḥ; kampayann iva medinīm; krodhasaṁraktalocanaḥ; jvalantam iva pāvakam; daṇḍahasta ivāntakaḥ; divyābharaṇabhūṣitaḥ; dīrgham uṣṇam ca niḥśvasya; bāṣpavyākulalocanaḥ; śataśoth sahastraśaḥ; śalabha iva pāvakam* etc.

Characterization

Originally the intention of the author would have been to create characters which would have different characteristics in various spheres of the battlefield. The proper names used for different characters may also suggest characteristics which later on changed to stereotypes not only in contents but also in expressions so as to suit the needs of the battlefield. A few characters might have borrowed their characteristics from Vedic deities. Folk-elements are also not missing and their anthropological characteristics are highlighted e.g., Ghaṭotkaca and Hiḍimbā. The sociological background of the characters like Bhīṣma, Kuntī and Draupadī is important for the formation of the theme of the *Mahābhārata*. A huge bulk of ethical values was wrapped around the characters so as to make the *Mahābhārata* a moral poem. So many colours were introduced to make the characters *par excellence*. But the formula poetry style exhibits their stereotype characteristics.

Impact

The impact of the *Mahābhārata* is very strong on ethical values, literature, philosophy and legal concepts where either the theme or the expression is influenced by its poetry. It has influenced the literature of India from Kashmir to Kanyakumari irrespective of the author's caste or religion. The declaration of the *Mahābhārata* that, "Without the basis of this story, no story can exist (*anāśrityaitadākhyānam kathā bhuvi na vidyate*)" has proved true because there is no literature in India which in extent/form/theme/

value or language is not inspired by the *Mahābhārata* particularly from the beginning of modern Indian literature. Even today, whensoever. there is a question of the identity of India or values, the media including the radio, opera, dramas, movies, or television take the refuge of the *Mahābhārata*. The popularity of the television serial *Mahābhārata* is an evidence that it has not only inspired the folk but also tried to re-establish national unity. The novelty of the story is so fascinating that its adaptations search for fresh values for modern India in the *Mahābhārata*. There may be a change in the theme but in language or idiom the impact of the *Mahābhārata* is visible.

Sanskrit literature has been influenced by the *Mahābhārata ab initio*. The list includes poets and dramatists like Bhāsa, Kalidāsa, Bhāravi, Māgha, Śri Harṣa, Dhanañjaya, and Meghavijaya Upādhyāya, Jaina *Purāṇas* like *Pāṇḍavacarita*, Hemacandra's *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita* and a number of the *śleṣa* poems. The play *Veṇisaṁhāra* was so popular that a number of its events and verses re-entered the *Mahābhārata*. The *Mahābhārata* has entered all the folk traditions of both north and southern India. Its serious impact is visible on art, architecture, numismatics and sculpture not only throughout India but also in the Far East. It has influenced poetic trends in Kampuchia, Java, and Thailand besides having various translations in the leading languages of the world.

Literary criticism was so much influenced by the *Mahābhārata* that *Śānta Rasa* was established as an independent *rasa* which entered the texts of literary criticism later.

Thus the *Mahābhārata* not only produced a most natural and spontaneous poetry but also a huge literature in languages of the world in content, expression, translations, adaptations, innovations and new creative writings. Its characters inspire fresh values for time immemorial both in content and expression.

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   kiṁ kavestasya kāvyena sarvavṛttāntagāminī ।
   katheva bhāratī yasya na vyāpnoti jagāttrayam ॥
2. *Ibid.*, I. 3.
   namaḥ sarvavide tasmai vyāsāya kavivedhase ।
   cakre puṇyam sarasvatyā yo varṣamiva bhāratam ॥
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4

Sanskrit Linguistics and Mathematics in Ancient India

Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat

Logical reasoning is a universal aptitude of man. But the methods of research, the tools used for progress in scientific inquiry, and the way of presentation of the resulting knowledge depend very much on regional cultures. There is nothing surprising in the fact that scientific knowledge grounded on the rational faculties of the human mind appeared in very different civilizations of the world, in the course of history. However one notes that the number of discoveries is higher in some periods, in some places. It shows that there are historical and cultural conditions that are favourable to the birth and progress of science.

The way of presentation of scientific material is still more dependent on particular cultures. It can be explained only by reference to the intellectual environment in which the scientists did their work. The task of the historian of sciences is not only to make the catalogue of the discoveries and appreciate the level of scientific knowledge at different historical times, but also to understand the conditions which led to the attainment of such or such level, to explain the original form of exposition. The evolution of the form of the scientific texts is not unimportant for the historian. It is an error to actualise the ideas of past scientists, to transpose in modern terminology their ancient expressions. For example, in the history

of Sanskrit mathematics, it is often said that Āryabhaṭa calculated the value of π as 3.1416, but that formulation implies he was using a decimal notation, which is wrong, as he expressed the said value in the form of a fraction. He really said that "100 plus 4, multiplied by 8, and added to 62,000 is the approximate measure of the circumference of a circle whose diameter is 20,000".

Ancient India reached a good level, not lower than other great ancient civilizations, in the field of mathematics and astronomy, but appears to have had a great originality in the exposition. That becomes easily explainable when one examines the environment and the culture of the authors. The ancient Vedic literature reveals to us a very intense intellectual activity in the context of a refined religious life. The practice of religious rites appears to have been the main profession of intellectuals. Even in such a context there was a lot of rational thinking and real scientific inquiry in several fields.

Rational thinking is prominent in the analysis of language. The first etymologies are found in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā.* The first interpretations of texts with systematic procedures appear in the *Brāhmaṇa*s. The old Vedic corpus of texts has been augmented with six ancillaries, the *Vedāṅga*s, which are techniques aiming at the conservation and correct understanding of their form and contents. The *Vedāṅga*s, because of their technical and practical character, are almost completely free from irrational speculation, and can be taken as representing the beginning of pure scientific literature in Sanskrit. Four of them bear upon language: *vyākaraṇa* or technique of formation of words and sentences, *śikṣā* or phonetics, *nirukta* or etymology, *chandas* or prosody and metrics. Two are ancillaries of rituals: *kalpa* or techniques of rites, *jyotiṣa* or astronomy with reference to the calendar of rites.

This classification reflects the prominence of the study of language. This is a permanent character of the Indian intellectual tradition. In the second century BC Patañjali declares *vyākaraṇa* to be the main *Vedāṅga.* A medievel theoretician of poetry, Ānandavardhana, pays the highest homage to liguistics: "The Vaiyākaraṇas are the first scholars, because all sciences are based on *vyākaraṇa*". Obviously in the mind of the Indian learned men the study of language held the place which mathematics held in the mind of the ancient Greek philosophers.

In the Vedic context mathematics do not occupy the first rank. They appear as an appendix to the techniques of rituals. Geometry

comes in the context of the construction of brick-altars for the celebration of Vedic sacrifices. It is not the production of a professional mathematician. It is one among several activities which were conducted in the same time for a common purpose, a religious celebration. A Vedic mathematician was not a specialist of mathematics; he was also a linguist; and most probably he was a priest having duties in ritualistic performances. Similarly, the linguist was not specialised in that field only; he was a ritualist and a performer of rites; and he had the same mathematical notions. This is clear from Pāṇini's treatment of ordinal numbers and words expressing fractions.

Now, considering the important rank of linguistics in the mind of the Vedic authors, we understand that this discipline may have had a strong influence on other disciplines. It is in this field that the ancient Indian thinkers achieved their best rationalistic inquiry and found their best method of scientific exposition, so that *vyākaraṇa* has always been taken as a model of methodology. In this paper we try to determine what kind of influence *vyākaraṇa* could have on a branch of knowledge as distant as mathematics, or at least what kind of relationship between the two disciplines was created by the supremacy of linguistics.

Pāṇini is not the first Indian linguist. He is the most ancient among those whose works have come down to us. He mentions masters anterior to him. His date is not known. Reasonable hypotheses on this much debated question place him in the seventh century BC at the earliest, in the fourth century BC at the latest. For those times, his work represents a scientific achievement of high level. It is slightly improper to call it a Sanskrit grammar. First the designation "Sanskrit" was not yet existing and Pāṇini never used this denomination for the language he spoke and described. He called it *bhāṣā* "spoken language, speech". In fact he did not mention any particular language. Nothing in his work shows that he had knowledge of other languages. He mentions only a few dialectal forms, which he conceives as pertaining to his unique language. He knows also unusual forms found only in Vedic hymns, and describes them as exceptions in the same language. And he describes this as if it were the totality of language. His work is a work of general liguistics, an inquiry on human speech considered from his own language taken as basic material.

Thus the word "grammar" does not translate exactly the Sanskrit

names of the discipline. The ancient and traditional names are *śabdānuśāsana* "teaching of words" and *vyākaraṇa*. This second designation is particularly interesting, because it contains a reference to the method of teaching. Etymologically it means the action to make something completely and in a special way. With reference to words it means the action to form them from their basic components, root and suffixes, to construct a sentence from them. It is associated to the word *vyupādana* or *vyutpatti* which mean "birth, production". *Vyākaraṇa* is the discipline which shows how to build up words to make a sentence. It is not an analysis of a given word or of an already used sentence. It shows how to generate new sentences and eventually new words such as secondary derivatives and compounds.

There is a notable difference between generation and analysis. The former is creative, the latter only an examination of already created objects. Pāṇini has described his knowledge of the language, not a limited corpus of samples or readymade sentences. To know a language means to be able to build up sentences from a corpus of grammatical rules and a dictionary kept in one's memory. Pāṇini defines the competence of the basic elements to realise meaningful and acceptable combinations. With the knowledge of this competence the user can create new acts of speech. The *vyākaraṇa* is such a creation. And Pāṇini's work is definitely a practical method to create correct acts of speech.

Vyākaraṇa and *vyutpatti* are sometimes explained with the word *saṃskāra*. This word is commonly used for all kinds of preparation for some action, arrangement of multiple elements for a performance requiring all them, preparation of materials for an operation. With reference to language it is the collection and arrangement with eventually phonemic transformations of word-elements and full words to prepare an act of speech. That must be the origin of the designation of the language as "Sanskrit", i.e., *saṃskṛta*. The set of forms which has received a *saṃskāra* according to the rules of *vyākaraṇa*, as formulated by Pāṇini or other linguists, is *saṃskṛta*. Long after the possible times of Pāṇini, even after Patañjali who does not yet use this term, *saṃskṛta* started to be used as the name of the language which was regularly prepared for usage by the application of the rules.

The operative rule is called *lakṣaṇa*. Patañjali explains this term. He says that one cannot learn a language by hearing the list of all

possible forms of all possible words in all possible uses. They are too numerous. He relates a myth. Bṛhaspati, preceptor of the gods, started to teach language, word by word, form after form, to the king of gods, Indra. After one hundred divine years he did not reach the end. Therefore, he concluded :

किंचित्सामान्यविशेषवल्लक्षणं प्रवर्त्य येनाल्पेन यत्नेन महतो महत: शब्दौघान्प्रतिपद्येरन्।

> One should undertake a certain *lakṣaṇa* made of that which is common and that which is distinctive. By such a light effort one can learn the huge flow of words.

The word *lakṣaṇa* has several meanings in Sanskrit. The most common is "mark, sign". For logicians it is the sign from which one infers an object to be different from others. It is a characteristic property which belongs to all members of a class of objects, and which is proper to that class. The perception of the characteristic feature is sufficient to identify an object and distinguish it from others. When one knows the *lakṣaṇa,* he knows a whole class of objects. Thus the *lakṣaṇa* is an indirect, light tool for knowing a class of objects, indirect because all the members of the class are known, not through direct, individual presentation, but through a common feature, light because there is presentation of only one property, not of a high, sometimes infinite, number of individuals. For linguists the *lakṣaṇa* is an operative rule or structure which serves the purpose of building up a number of word-forms. The rule is unique for multiple cases. As the basic material of *vyākaraṇa* is the competence of linguistic structures to create new acts of speech, its *lakṣaṇa*s consist of one characteristic feature common to many possible, existing and future, occurrences.

Language is complex. There is practically no case of actual usage which can be built up with a single rule. Generally a long chain of rules applied in a definite order is necessary. Thus the rule appears to settle only one step in the formation of a usable form. Nevertheless, generally it is a unique rule serving multiple cases, one particular step in the formation of many cases.

Let us consider one example of a small chain of rules formulated by Pāṇini. Among the basic elements of Sanskrit there are about 2000 verbal roots called *dhātu* and a smaller number of suffixes. Pāṇini prescribes a theoretical suffix *l* to express the idea of agent after a root which expresses the idea of an action:

धातोः। लः कर्तरि।

Taking the root *nī* "to lead" we obtain from these two rules : * *nī-l* "agent of the action to lead". A rule prescribes the theoretical form *laṭ* to the suffix, when the action is described in the present time:

वर्तमाने लट्।

* *nī-laṭ* means "agent of the present action to lead". Another rule replaces *laṭ* by *ti* to signify the third person; another adds a modifier-affix *śap* before the agent-signifying suffix; another substitutes *e* to the final *ī* of the root; one more subtitutes *ay* to *e* before the vowel ***a*** :

तिप्तस्झि°। कर्तरि शप्। सार्वधातुका°। एचोऽयवायावः।

* *nī-ti;* * *nī-a-ti;* * *ne-a-ti; nayati* "he leads".

This is a verbal form. An equivalent formation is the agent noun derived from the same root with the suffix *aka.* Pāṇini prescribes the theoretical form *ṇvul* to express the idea of agent of an action, after a root, using again the rule "dhātoḥ" :

धातोः। ण्वुल्तृचौ।

From the same root *nī* we obtain * nī-ṇvul signifying "agent of the action to lead". Further rules substitute *ai* to the final vowel of the root, *aka* to *vu,* and *āy* to *ai,* add the fist or nominative case-ending *su,* replace *su* by *ḥ* :

अचोञ्ञ्णिति। युवोरनाकौ। एचोऽयवायावः।

* *nai-vu,* * *nai-aka,* * *nāy-aka,* * *nāy-aka-s, nāyakaḥ* "leader".

This is the formation of one individual word. Pāṇini's grammar provides rules to build up longer expressions made of several words, up to a complete sentence. For instance to build up an expression yielding the meaning "leader of the gods", starting from *deva* "god" and *nāyakaḥ* "leader" Pāṇini prescribes the sixth or genitive case-ending, *ām* in the plural, as expressing the idea of object of an action :

स्वौजस्°.... ङसोसाम्°। कर्तृकर्मणोः कृति।

* *deva-ām nāyakaḥ.* The gods are the object of the action to lead performed by an agent. Each component of the meaning corresponds to a particular element:

deva	:	god
ām	:	idea of object of the action
nī/nāy	:	action of lead
aka	:	idea of agent of the action
s/ḥ	:	nominative

Further phonetic rules add *n* to the ending and substitute *ā* to the final vowel of *deva*, *ṃ* to the final *m*. We obtain the final expression: *devānāṃ nāyakaḥ.*

This is not the sole form obtainable for the same meaning. Pāṇini provides rules to build up an optional form which can be used alternatively. He enjoins to consider the sequence *devānāṃ nāyakaḥ*, not as a sequence of two words, but as a unit called *samāsa* "compound" and to treat this unit as a basic stem (*prātipadika*) inside which previous case-endings are suppressed and which can receive a new case-ending such as the first:

षष्ठी। कृत्तद्धितसमासाश्च। सुपो धातुप्रातिपदिकयोः।

* *devānāṃnāyakaḥ*, * *devanāyaka*, *devanāyakaḥ* "leader of the gods".

From these examples one can see clearly Pāṇini's methodology. He is well aware of the structure of derivatives, compounds etc. But he does not present it in analytic form. He does not speak about the splitting of an existing compound. He just enjoins a process of building up a compound structure, in the form of the transformation of a set of two words into a single new unit. His formula is basically a tool to create new compounds. It teaches the competence of the structure to produce forms at the time of usage.

The short form of Pāṇini's rules is as remarkable as their nature. With reference to its form a rule is called *sūtra*. As Pāṇini has applied to the composition of his *sūtras* the greatest number of procedures of abbreviations and other types of formalisation devices, his work has been a model of scientific writing in the entire Indian scholarly tradition.

The most ancient Indian *sūtras* which have come down to us are Pāṇini's and a few treatises of Vedic rituals called *Kalpa-sūtras*. They are composed in the same spirit, even if they do not use formalisation to the same degree. Like Pāṇini's work the ritualistic works are practical manuals for performing religious rites. They are oriented towards action and they pursue the same ideal of generality. A *sūtra* of ritual describes an action which may be common to several rites. In the *sūtras* of Baudhāyana, Āpastamba, Kātyāyana etc. one comes across a section dealing with the construction of brick-altars for Vedic sacrifices. It is called *Śulba-sūtra* "Cord-formulary", because the cord is the main tool for such constructions. It explains what a priest should do to pile up bricks of different sizes and shapes to build an altar. The Vedic altar is sometimes a complex structure of huge dimensions, as in the case

of the *śyena-citi,* and altar having the shape of an eagle with his wings spread out. In this context the authors of the *sūtra*s have solved a number of basic problems of geometry.

The first striking feature of a *Śulba-sūtra* is its high degree of generality. This is a quality which it shares only with Pāṇini's model. It is composed with less brevity than the linguistic *sūtra.* But it follows the same methodology. It consists of *lakṣaṇa*s, defined in this case, as in the case of linguistic, as general rules applicable to many individual cases.

For instance, let us consider the *Śulba-sūtra* of Baudhāyana which in its first chapter formulates a set of rules to make the construction of squares and rectangles with the help of a few pegs and a cord. To construct a square one should take a cord measuring two times the side of the desired square, with a loop at each end. One should make a mark in the middle of the cord. One half is technically called *prācī.* Another mark is done in the second half, at a point shorter by one-fourth and the mark is technically called *nyañcana.* Two pegs are set into the ground at a distance equal to the *prācī.* The loops of the cord are fixed on the pegs. Then one should stretch the cord, holding it at the *nyañcana* point Fig. 1.

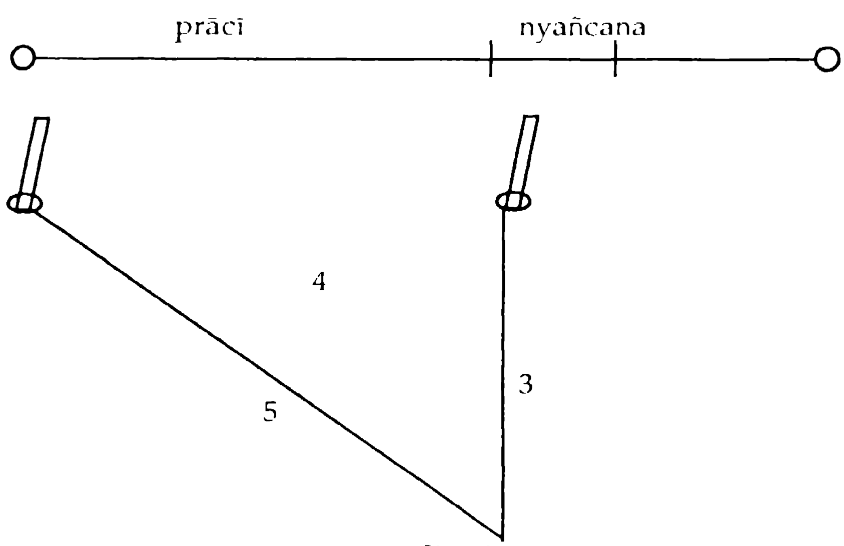


Fig. 1

By stretching the cord at the *nyañcana* point, one draws a triangle, the sides of which measure 3, 4, 5 respecitvely. A right angle is obtained and thus a line perpendicular to the pegs line. The operation is repeated on the other side to obtain another right angle and

another perpendicular. By using the middle mark of the cord, one can draw easily the four sides of the required square. The ratio 3, 4, 5 may have been discovered by an empirical method. We remark that Baudhāyana has already formulated a general rule which is applicable to many individual cases, as he refers not to a given measurement for the side of the square, but to any measurement.

Baudhāyana had the knowledge of other ratios for the sides of rectangle triangles. He describes the same operation with a cord measuring the length of the side of the required square increased by one half, enjoining to place the *nyañcana* mark at a point shorter by one-sixth on the excess part of the cord. In that case one obtains the ratio 5, 12, 13.

The necessity of duplicating the area of certain bricks for ritualistic purpose led the ancient Vedic priests to discover the way to double a square area. Baudhāyana formulates it by saying that "the diagonal cord of a square produces two times the same area". That means that from this diagonal a square of double area can be built up with the above procedure. Baudhāyana formulates also a procedure to treble the area of a square. One should take the side of the given square as the smaller side of a rectangle, and the diagonal as the longer side. The diagonal of that rectangle is told "to produce three times the area of the given square" (fig. 2).

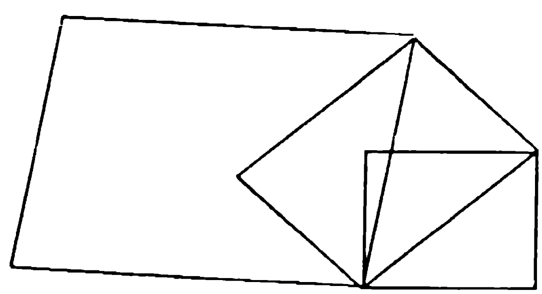


Fig. 2

Here Baudhāyana introduces the term *karaṇī*, which was to play an important role in Sanskrit mathematical literature. Its first meaning is "producer". The diagonal cord of a square is the side of a square of double area. Thus it is told to be "the producer of the square of double area" or in an abbreviated form *dvi-karaṇī* "producer of 2". Similarly the cord of the rectangle which is the base of a square of treble area is called *tri-karaṇī* "producer of 3". If the first square is taken as a unit with a side measuring 1 and an area equal

to 1, the *dvi-karaṇī* is its diagonal, produces a square of area equal to 2 and is itself equal to √2. Similarly the *tri-karaṇī* produces a square of area equal to 3 and is itself equal to √3. In this way, with the technical term *karaṇī,* Baudhāyana has given a representation of irrational numbers.

Such a construction could have been discovered empirically. But after presenting a few examples of this sort Baudhāyana comes to a very general statement, which is a real mathematical proposition:

> दीर्घचतुरस्रस्याक्ष्णयारज्जुः पार्श्वमानी तिर्यङ्मानी च यत्पृथग्भूते कुरुतस्तदुभयं करोति।।

> The diagonal cord of a rectangle produces both the areas which the length and breadth produce separately.

This is the first theorem enunciated in the history of Sanskrit mathematics. Baudhāyana does not give a demonstration. It appears to be an induction made from the examples given before. By such a general proposition Baudhāyana is really a mathematician who has gone above experience and empirical methods. This theorem, in its turn, will be the starting point of further propositions, which are not empirically observable and which can be deduced only through logical reasoning.

An example of this is as follows. Baudhāyana formulates a procedure to construct a square whose area is the sum of the areas of two given squares. One has to cut in the larger square a rectangle whose breadth is the side of the smaller square. The diagonal of this rectangle is the side of the desired square (fig. 3).

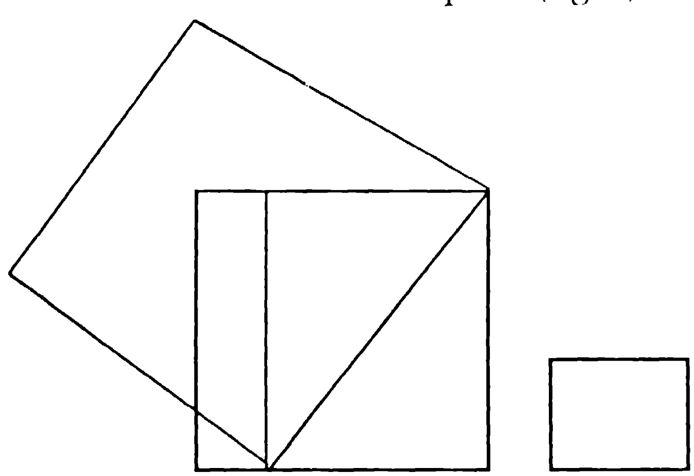


Fig. 3

This is obviously based on the previous theorem: the diagonal of the rectangle produces both the areas produced by its sides separately. Baudhāyana is thus able to deduce several other constructions. The important methodological point here is that the procedure is obtained through a set of rules logically connected and applicable in a given order.

These examples show the operative aspect of the formulas of the treatise. We have already underlined their levels of generality. All that does not fail to recall the method of formation of words through a set of general rules applied in a definite order. Each formula of a geometrical construction is a sort of *lakṣaṇa* adapted to its object. The basic methodology is the same.

Indian mathematicians were Sanskrit pandits. Vyākaraṇa must have been one of the main components in their intellectual education. As they were initially trained in this discipline, it is quite likely that they have been influenced by the general methods and even by particular procedures. They were led to work with geometrical figures as they were working on words.

We have described above the methodology of the linguists and noted their practical attitude, their orientation towards operative devices. They have not done any descriptive presentation of language structures. They only worked out an efficient system of rules for the practical purpose of building up sentences for direct use. They enjoined a way to transform a set of words into a single compound unit. That established a scientific law by itself. And in matter of language rules no demonstration was to be given. The practical efficiency was the proof of the accuracy of the rule. If the law appeared to be contradicted by usage, the linguist formulated an exception.

The *sūtra* of geometry has been conceived in the same intellecutal background. It displays the same spirit and attitude towards practice and efficiency. From experience it induces general propositions, and when satisfied with their operative efficiency, does not give any more demonstration. Baudhāyana induces the general theorem from his observation of the ratio 3, 4, 5 etc., and does not give a demonstration. He does not do in mathematics that which he was not doing in linguistics. The relationship of the *sūtras* of mathematics and linguistics seems very probable. And it may be this absence of autonomy of the *Śulba-sūtra* with regard to other disciplines, which has given to ancient Indian geometry its specificity

and which explains that the Indian mathematician, in his researches, has not encountered the logical form, comprising theorem and demonstration, which gives to ancient Greek mathematics their originality.

5

Bhāsa and Kālidāsa: The Inseparable Divergence

Shriniwas Rath

Kālidāsa had known Bhāsa, Saumilla and Kaviputra as playwrights of the past, who continued to hold sway in the field of theatre. Unfortunately we know nothing of Saumilla and Kaviputra beyond their enumeration alongside Bhāsa. Daṇḍī and Bāṇabhaṭṭa also testify to the widespread fame and immense popularity of Bhāsa.[1] Finally, in the course of the next three or four hundred years, Rājaśekhara comes forward to record the eminence gained by *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* in withstanding the acid test of time.[2] This statement has, in the first place, confirmed the persisting popularity of *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* and in the second place, has led the way to the discovery of the long-lost plays of Bhāsa in the second decade of the twentieth century.

The spell of Bhāsa on the youthful curiosity and idealism of Kālidāsa is strikingly evident in the structure and phrasing of the prologue to his *Mālavikāgnimitram*. Kālidāsa calls himself a 'Vartamāna-Kavi' or a present-day poet in contrast to Bhāsa, Saumilla, Kaviputra and the like of enormous fame. Yearning for instant recognition he invites, in the same breath, the audience or the prudent lot to exercise a certain discrimination between the old and the new on the basis of critical evaluation. This is a complex

situation. How could one compare a singular play with almost a bunch of earlier plays? Although Kālidāsa sounds as having struck a note of universal interest, seeking to mitigate the lingering discord between the old and the new, the use of the word 'Anyatarāt', denoting 'either of the two', with reference to *Mālavikāgnimitram* shifts the focus of attention to the best of the bunch. Kālidāsa is so sure of his work outmatching *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* in the critical estimation of the wise that he does not hesitate to call the conformist a fool: *Mūḍhaḥ para-pratyaya-neya-buddhiḥ*.

It is very likely that the *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* of Bhāsa continued to draw a good crowd till at least the staging of the first play of Kālidāsa. The ascendancy of Kālidāsa's popularity on the Sanskrit stage might as well have contributed to hold the Bhāsa plays in check, even in the lifetime of Kalidāsa himself. May be the old folk in the land of Avanti, said to be well-versed in Udayana-Kathā in *Meghadūtam*,[3] owed their proficiency to the Udayana-plays of Bhāsa, which had in the meantime, lost currency for the younger people. Be that as it may, Kālidāsa finds it difficult to reconcile himself to the plot construction of *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* and decides to better the perspective in his *Mālavikāgnimitram*.

The central theme of *Svapna* is Udayana's devotion to Vāsavadattā. Under the strain of certain political compulsions Yaugandharayaṇa concocts a plot with the consent of Vāsavadattā. Both of them are declared to have been consumed by a devastating fire at Lāvāṇaka, whereas they move away incognito to Magadha as pilgrims. Vāsavadattā is entrusted to the care of princess Padmāvatī, who in turn gets married to Udayana. Even after the marriage Udayana continues to entertain a strong bond of attachment with Vasavadatta. Padmāvatı and her attendants including Vāsavadattā overhear the king, confiding in Vasantaka, the jester, to this effect with tears in his eyes, and Padmāvatī does try to console him.

Now Padmāvati is reported to be ill with a severe headache. Vasantaka leads the king to Samudra-gṛha. It is found to be vacant and the king sits down to wait and falls asleep on the bed dreaming about Vāsavadattā. Vasavadatta is next to enter the room and finds her husband asleep. The king wakes up and catches a glimpse of Vāsavadatta while she manages to run away. Vasantaka tries to explain the whole thing as a dream. Udayana is informed of the successful military manoeuvrings to thwart the aggression of Aruni. Inspite of the final victory, the recovery of the Ghoṣavatī lute

renews the grief of the king for Vāsavadattā. Padmāvatī identifies Vāsavadattā through her portrait received from Ujjain. Yaugandharāyaṇa reappears to claim his so-called sister and is forgiven for his scheming. Udayana decides to visit Ujjain with Vāsavadattā and Padmāvatī.

Kālidāsa seems to have set his eyes on the apparent incongruities of *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* and planned to devise a complete contrast to the thematic structure with a more convincing and realistic approach in his *Mālavikāgnimitram*. Political ascendancy gained through the military action led by Rumaṇvān or Vīrasena constitutes a common background to both the plays. The characterization of Udayana with regard to his growing intensity of grief at the loss of his earlier love in the face of his second marriage with a younger maiden is completely reversed in the portrayal of Agnimitra. Kālidāsa visualizes Agnimitra to represent the normal male attitude of passion and tenderness towards the object of his desires. The dramatic device of Bhāsa in creating a scare about the snake at the entrance of a vacant Samudra-gṛha in the fifth act of *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* has been resurrected by Kālidāsa at the doorstep of his Samudra-gṛha in the fourth act of *Mālavikāgnimitram* to build a more effective dramatic situation. Kālidāsa has consciously opted to name the meeting place of Mālavikā and Agnimitra also as Samudra-gṛha.

Kālidāsa is prompted by a powerful urge to enter the spirit of everything available in literary or cultural heritage and turn it timeless. This is not the place either to discuss Kālidasa as an inheritor of the literary tradition or to assess Bhasa for his bequests to the worthy successor. It is the inseparable divergence of interest in thematic approach with regard to the denouement between Bhāsa and Kālidasa that seeks our indulgence here. Kalidasa is certainly free to try his hand in restructuring the plot to suit his imagination at any point of time after Bhāsa, but the plot construction of *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* seems to have been conditioned by a definite frame of mind possessed of prompt reaction to the contemporary course of events.

A careful study of the epilogues or 'Bharata-Vakyas' in the plays of Bhāsa reflects valuable changes in the socio-political conditions of the country. In his epilogue to *Karṇabhāraṁ*[4] Bhāsa seems to focus on the failure of the Gaṇarājyas by praying for the emergence of a monarch endowed with kingly qualities. His dreams come true and

he is fortunate to witness the rise of a central authority exercising effective control over adversaries. Bhāsa is quick to commit his support to this monarch in his epilogue to *Ūrubhaṅgaṁ* — '*Gām Pātu No Narapatiḥ Śamitāripakṣaḥ.*' It is in this play that Aśvatthāmā enthrones Durjaya without a coronation merely by dint of verbal proclamation by a Brahmin.[5] Since there is nothing about a son of Duryodhana in the epic, Bhāsa's invention draws a close parallel to Chandragupta, said to have been declared a king by Chāṇakya, a Brahmin much in advance of a formal coronation. With the gradual consolidation of power and his rise to supremacy, this Rājā or 'Narapati' is called 'Rāja-Siṁha' or the best of kings in the estimation of Bhāsa.

Bhāsa has adopted a common epilogue to the next three plays, namely, *Pratijñā, Abhiṣeka* and *Avimāraka.* The epilogue, "May the cattle (wealth) be secure; May the external aggression subside: May our Rāja-Siṁha rule over this entire expanse of the country" — speaks of a shattered economy subsequent to the retreat of Alexander's Indian campaign and as yet insecure borders of the country. Besides some three hundred thousand head of cattle taken away from India, the lifting of cattle continued to be a favourite pastime with the soldiers stationed in foreign settlements scattered all over. The first half of the epilogue to *Pañcharātram* presents a spectacular change in the perspective; "What a joy ! All of us are happy with the attainment of expanded fraternity".[6] In seems reassured at the stability and independence of the now powerful monarchy. In order to establish his point, Bhāsa makes his Duryodhana present half his kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas.[7] Bhāsa has taken enormous liberties with the *Mahābhārata* story, to suit the festive mood of his audience in celebrating the treaty between Seleukos Nikātor and Chandragupta Maurya. A voluntary surrender of four provinces in the background of a long-drawn hostility is as unbelievable as Duryodhana handing over willingly, half the territory of his empire to the Pāṇḍavas. Subsequent to this expansion of jurisdiction, a full face picture of the territory extending up to the oceans with Himālaya and Vindhya as its earrings, under the unrivalled sovereign sway of Rāja-Siṁha, assumes the right connotation to constitute a common epilogue[8] to the next three plays, namely *Bālacaritam, Dūta-Vākyam* and *Svapna-Vāsavadattam.*

Bhāsa has consciously planned the purposive use of his dramatic art. His explicit commitment to contemporary relevance is conveyed

by a specially coined term 'Kāla-Saṁvadī' in *Pratimā* and *Pratijñā*. Bhāsa does not, for a moment, seem to exploit a traditional story for his Udayana plays. Udayana, Pradyota, Vāsavadattā and may be even Darśaka are drawn from history but Yaugandharāyaṇa and Padmāvatī are certainly concocted by Bhāsa to suit his convenience. He has used Yaugandharāyaṇa as a replica of Chāṇakya. The description of Yaugandharāyaṇa on his entry in the fourth act of *Pratijñā* turns out to be a virtual portrait of Chāṇakya. He is compared with the lightning cloud revealing, at the back a bit of 'Chandra' or the moon.[9] Chāṇakya is well known for his *pratijñā* to justify the title of the play also. Chāṇakya has also picked up a verse from this very play in order to quote in his *Artha-Śāstra*.[10] At this period of time Bhāsa seems to have known the Greek theatre at close enongh quarters to introduce an artifical elephant on the model of the Trojan horse, while Bhāmaha is distanced by almost a millennium to find it incredible. Bhāsa has avoided the appearance of Udayana and Vāsavadattā on the stage since his focus of attention is Chāṇakya represented by Yaugandharāyaṇa. In the same way, the contemporary relevance of Seleukos is also conveyed to the audience in *Pañcharātram*, by forcing Duryodhana, against the epic content, to surrender half of his kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas.

Seleukos is known to have crossed the Indus in 305 B.C. to recover the Macedonian conquests and according to Vincent A. Smith, ". . . .the hosts of Chandragupta were too strong for the invader and Seleukos was obliged to retire and conclude a humiliating peace."[11] Vṛddha-Gopālaka the poor old herdsman of Bhāsa is seen clamouring for peace with the words 'Śāntir-Bhavatu' etc. in the *Pañcharātram*. Bhāsa had all along emphasized the futility of wars and made his Duryodhana explicitly realize the same in *Ūrubhaṅgaṁ* and *Pañcharātraṁ*. The conclusion of peace in or about 303 B.C. with Seleukos provided Chandragupta and his mentor Chāṇakya with an opportunity to reconstruct the administrative and economic institutions in the best interest of the empire. Bhāsa as a witness to these monumental efforts has set his eyes on the consolidation of peace and subsequent disarmament. In his *Bālacharitaṁ* he fights to the finish the forces of disruption and concludes, "Give up this excitement of war and what is there to do with the weaponry too"—*Sannāhaṁ Tyajata Kimāyudhaiścha Kāryaṁ*.[12] The message of *Dūtavākyam* stands out in bold relief with the personified entry of

weapons and their voluntary withdrawal followed by a touching farewell to each weapon individually and collectively.

The concept of disarmament propounded by Bhāsa is unique for his age of monarchy. He is alive to the dangers of oppression by despotic rulers and does not hesitate to portray his Vāsudeva pleading guilty of reckless indiscretion in so many words, "Sudarśana! In anger I forgot my duty."[13] Bhāsa's commitment to peace and contemporary relevance is genuine. He does not aim at converting the stock of popular tales, mythological stories of historical events into dramatic composition. In his support to monarchy, he has always tried to preserve his right to independent judgement.

The situation in *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* is altogether different. Ratification of the treaty between Seleukos and Chandragupta masterminded by Chāṇakya culminates in a matrimonial alliance.[14] The entry of the Greek princess seems to have pushed the mother of Bindusara to a secondary position. Bhāsa, at the same time, seems to harbour some *ab initio* reservation about the whole situation. The proposal of Virāṭa in offering Uttarā's hand in marriage to Arjuna in *Pañcharātraṁ* draws a quick comment from Yudhiṣṭhira, *'Etad avanataṁ śiraḥ'* or this brings our heads down with shame. The situation is reversed subsequently, with the conditional acceptance of the proposal in favour of his own son, to *'Etad unnataṁ śiraḥ'* or this is that holds our heads up.[15] Who knows, Bhāsa might have reconciled to the marriage if it had been with Bindusāra ? However Bhāsa does not want to spare Chāṇakya now and starts rearranging the cast of his earlier *Pratijñā* to emphasize his reaction to the changed circumstances by inducting Padmāvatī to represent the Greek princess. He makes the bold move to throw his weight behind the older queen (mother of Bindusāra) by restoring Vāsavadattā to Udayana.

The play opens in the vicinity of a hermitage with the entry of Yaugandharāyaṇa travelling incognito as a mendicant along with Vāsavadattā as his sister dressed in Avantī attire. Yaugandharāyaṇa seems to have been receiving the willing cooperation of Vāsavadattā in implementing his plot to hasten a materimonial alliance with the kingdom of Magadha. He reiterates his faith in the predicted marriage of Padmāvati and Udayana. Vāsavadattā knows nothing about the prediction and feels elated to note that the hand of

Padmāvatī had been sought for her own brother. Her singular devotion to the well-being of her beloved husband has prompted her to support the efforts of Yaugandharāyaṇa and as such she fails to scent the danger to the interests of her personal life and domestic harmony. She is soon assigned the protective care of the princess Padmāvatī. She is left alone to grin and bear the wedding ceremony of her husband and Padmāvatī. It is the philosophic indifference of an astute politician like Yaugandharāyaṇa that sets the trap from behind the curtain. Padmāvatī seems to accept the developments innocently.

Bhāsa does not allow Padmāvatī to share the same amount of tenderness and sympathy as Vāsavadattā. Padmāvatī with her reported headache is not found occupying the 'Samudra-gṛha'. However, the quest leads to the dream encounter between Udayana and Vāsavadattā and nobody as such bothers to trace the whereabouts of Padmāvatī later. The dramatic device of creating a scare with the snake culminates in pointing to a dubious comparison between Padmāvatī and the snake. Ending a sentence with the word 'Kākodara' or snake and beginning the next with Padmāvatī provides the Vidūṣaka with a comfortable scope to exploit the proximity and conjoin both the words to denote differently. Bhāsa is known to introduce *Patākā-Sthānaka* on the same lines. It is interesting to note here that the Vidūṣaka in the traditional 'Kooḍiattam' performance of the fifth act of *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* warns the king to stay back since he had sighted a snake wriggling on the floor. The king tries to verify the situation and calls him a fool for his inability to see the garland made to assume the movements of the snake by a little gust of the evening breeze.[16] At this point the Vidūṣaka interprets with a hint of glee the factual observation of the king to mean a 'foolish she snake'—instead of the garland. He connects his own appellation 'Mūrkha' or fool with 'Sarpa' the snake and the feminine gender used in Sanskrit for 'Mālā' the garland and ends up in amusing the audience with his ingenious idea of a 'foolish she snake'

Sanskrit plays are known to start with a prayer dedicated to the welfare of the spectators commonly conveyed by the work 'Vaḥ'. It is only Bhāsa who has made two exceptions. He has used 'Te' in Avimāraka and 'Tvāṁ' in *Svapna-Vāsavadattam*. 'Te' in Avimāraka in convincing since 'the earth beneath one royal umbrella' could not have been offered collectively to the spectators under a monarchy. The monarch was either seated prominently in the audience or it

must have been a special show for the monarch and his retinue. A.C. Woolner has unnecessarily changed 'Te' to 'Tām' and translated it to 'this earth' (*Tāṁ Vasudhāṁ*) with a footnote for the change.[17] Fortunately he has retained 'Tvāṁ' in singular in the present context of *Svapna-Vāsavadattaṁ* and translated it as 'thee'. Does this mean that Bhāsa has succeeded to arrange a special inaugural show for his beloved 'Rāja Siṁha' or Chandragupta Maurya to witness the performance ? If the play was intended to emphasize the comparative importance of the senior queen as against the newly wedded princess instrumental in the expansion of the empire and political supremacy, the possibility of the dedication to the monarch looks all the more justified.

In the light of the foregoing discussion the play may be easily dated between the ratification of the treaty in 303 B.C. and the imperial succession in 298 B.C. of Bindusāra. With the allocation of three years for the preparation and staging of *Bālacharitaṁ* and *Dūtavākyaṁ* after the production of *Pañcharātraṁ* in 303 B.C., our choice for the production of *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* is further narrowed down to the last two years (299-298 B.C.) of the rule of Chandragupta Maurya. Since the death of a monarch of the stature of Chandragupta Maurya could not pass unnoticed by the contemporary world, the possibility of *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* affecting the monarch to abdicate in favour of his son may also not be ruled out. Bhāsa may have been humbled or silenced for the defiance of authority, the fire (Chanakya?) has certainly failed to consume the great play. Be that as it may, tradition has always held *Svapna-Vāsavadattaṁ* in high esteem.

The theatrical norms adopted by Bhāsa seem to differ from the convention prescribed by Bharata Muni in his *Nāṭyaśāstra.* A.C. Woolner feels that the death of Duryodhana on the stage was introduced deliberately against orthodox Sanskrit dramaturgy and reflects, "Does it date from a time before the convention was fixed, or does it represent a defiance of that convention at a later date?" Although we do not know the specific norms of Indian theatre prevalent before Bharata, the possibility of his discarding alien influences on the Indian stage may not be ruled out. The purposive character of the plays of Bhāsa in this case turns out to be a good example of the fact that Bhāsa was quick to assimilate new ideas or influences of Greek theatre. Bhāsa is not alone. The stage of Śūdraka also represents a pre-Bharata model. India has assimilated

influences from many cultures and the plays of Bhāsa provide ample scope for a fresh evaluation in this direction.

Kālidāsa is certainly inspired by the fundamentals of Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. He is a poet of perfection. His concern to improve upon the plays of Bhāsa is both natural and desirable. It is not without reason that Kālidāsa has set a high goal to compete with his own mentor. The unconscious emulation of Bhāsa's style in the prologue of *Vikramorvaśīyam* speaks for the powerful influence of Bhāsa and the inseparable divergence between the two becomes all the more evident in the comparable situations in *Svapna* and *Mālavikā.*

References

1. *Suvibhakta-Mukhādyaṅgair-Vyakta-Lakṣaṇa-Vṛttibhiḥ /*
   Pareto'Pi Sthito Bhāsaḥ śarīreṇaiva Nāṭakaiḥ //
   Daṇḍin in *Avantisundarī-Kathā* Cited in *Indian Hist. Quarterly*, 1929, p. 726.
   Sūtradhāra-Kṛtārambhair Nāṭakair Bahu-Bhūmikaiḥ /
   Sapatākair-Yaśo Lebhe Bhāso Devakulairiva //
   Bāṇa Bhaṭṭa, *Harṣacharitam*
2. *Bhāsa-Nāṭaka-Chakre'smin Chhekaiḥ Kṣipte Parīkṣitum /*
   Svapna-Vāsavadattasya Dāhako'bhūnna Pāvakaḥ //
   —Rājaśekhara quoted in *Sūktimuktāvalī*
3. *Pūrva-Megha*, 30.
4. *Sarvatra Saṁpadaḥ Santu Naśyantu Vipadaḥ Sadā /*
   Rājā Rājaguṇopeto Bhūmimekaḥ Praśastu Naḥ //
   —*Karṇabhāram*, 1.25
5. *Vinābhiṣekaṁ Rājā Tvam Viproktair Vachanair Bhava /*
   Ūrubhaṅgaṁ, 1.65
6. *Hanta Sarve Prasannaḥ Smaḥ Pravṛaddha-Kula-Saṅgrahāḥ /*
   Imāmapi Mahīm Kṛtsnāṁ Rājā-Siṁhaḥ Praśastu Naḥ //
   —*Pañcharātram*, 3.26
7. *Bāḍham Dattam Mayā Rājyam Pāndavebhyo Yathāpuraṁ /*
   —*Pañcharātram*, 3.25
8. *Imām Sāgara-Paryantāṁ Himavad-Vindhya-Kuṇḍalāṁ /*
   Mahīm Ekātapatrāṅkāṁ Rāja-Siṁhah Praśāstu Naḥ //
9. *Saṭaḍidiva Payodaḥ Kiñchid-Udgīrṇa-Chandraḥ*
   Pratijñā, 4.3
10. *Navaṁ Sārāvaṁ* etc. *Pratijñā*, 4.2
11. Vincent A. Smith, *The Early History of India*, Oxford University Press, 1924, p. 125.
12. *Bālacharitaṁ*, 5.13.

13. *Sudarśana ! Roṣāt Samudāchāro Nāvekṣitaḥ. Gamyatāṁ Svanilayaṁ Eva.* *Dūtavākyam*, after 1.46
14. Vincent A. Smith, op. cit., p. 125.
15. *Pañcharātram*, before and after 2.71.
16. *Svapna-Vāsavadattam*, 5.3.
17. A.C. Woolner and Lakshman Sarup, *Thirteen Plays of Bhāsa*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1985. *Avimāraka*, p. 63.
18. Ibid, *The Broken Thighs*, p.43.

6

Prākṛt Poetry: Hāla's *Sattasaī**

Herman Tieken

I

When in Viśākhadatta's *Mudrārākṣasa* (ninth century) the snake-charmer Jirṇaviṣa is not allowed into Minister Cāṇakya's presence (the latter is apparently not in the mood for a rope trick) he asks the servant to inform the minister that he is not only a snake-charmer but also a Prākṛt poet. In evidence of his art he presents a verse written by him, which runs as follows:

> All bees should listen carefully to the way that bee hums, who all on his own managed to suck the honey from the flower to the very last drop.

Upon hearing this verse Cāṇakya realizes that the snake-charmer is actually one of his own spies he had sent to Pāṭaliputra, the "City of Flowers", who has returned with information.

The verse is presented as a specimen of a specific poetic tradition. A similar function is involved in the verse the heroine of Kālidāsa's play *Śākuntala* has inscribed with her nails on a leaf:

> Why are you so cruel and won't you tell me what you think of me? For night and day love torments my body which belongs to you.

Both verses are in the so-called Mahārāṣṭrī dialect, though it should be noted that Jīrṇaviṣa's disguise as a snake-charmer must have been more convincing than that as a Prākṛt poet, as his verse contains a capital blunder which in enemy country could have cost him his life. Otherwise, these lines, with their coded message clothed in a description of a scene from nature, are perfect examples of a well-known, independent poetic tradition in Māhārāṣṭrī Prākṛt, and so is the verse produced by Śakuntalā, in which she complains about the painful nature of love.

Our earliest source for this type of poetry is the *Sattasaī* (*Saptaśatī*), a collection of 700 erotic verses (*gāthā*s), which, according to tradition, were compiled by the first-century Sātavāhana king Hāla. The Sātavāhanas ruled over parts of the present-day state of Maharashtra, and many of the scenes depicted in the *Sattasaī* have been set in this area. Thus, the poems mention, among other things, the Godāvarī, the Narmadā, and the Vindhyas. It is due to the great prestige and popularity of this text from Maharashtra that its dialect has come to be known under the name Mahārāṣṭrī.

By its own declaration (v. 2) the *Sattasaī* forms a side show to the *Kāmasūtra* and other learned treatises on love:

> Those who loudly claim to know all there is to be known from learned treatises on love, but at the same time fail to understand this nectar-like poem in Prākṛt, by reading or by listening to it, why should they not change their tune?

While texts like the *Kāmasūtra* teach an ideal form of love-life, available only to the rich and the smart, the *Sattasaī* shows love in all its complications whether arising out of jealousy, separation, poverty or stupidity. The verses of the *Sattasaī* describe how people, mainly the women involved, react to the various awkward situations which arise in the course of their lives as lovers or as wives, and what they say in such situations. The *Sattasaī* offers examples of both superbly clever and completely foolish, or even self-destructive reactions. As a whole, however, this poetry was clearly aimed at a sophisticated audience, or reading public, consisting of quick-witted people who were able at a glance to grasp the implications of the scenes and to discriminate between the deft reaction and the foolish one. Or, as the seventh-century poet Bāṇa wrote:

> Sātavāhana made an immortal compilation (treasure) of beautiful sayings containing pure descriptions (of pure jewels) which was pleasing to people with sophisticated tastes.

Apart from the pun on "compilation" and "treasure", this verse also contains a pun on the word "sophisticated" (*agrāmya*), in that indeed many of the scenes depicted in the *Sattasaī* are set in the village (*grāma*).

Before turning to these village scenes, which form probably the most interesting part of the *Sattasaī*, it should also be noted that the imagery in the verses is almost exclusively derived from nature, not as something known only from a distance, but as part of the immediate surroundings. Thus, when a woman wants make clear to an impatient lover that he should slow his pace and proceed in a more gentle way, instead of telling him so directly, she draws his attention to a scene in the surrounding nature:

> The bees are buzzing wildly, eager to taste the sweet honey, but the lotus will open only after it has been kissed by the rays of the sun (v. 495).

Verses like this are fairly common in the *Sattasaī*. In the following example (v. 394) a woman complains about her husband who failed to come home before the onset of the rains. She puts the blame for this delay on his chasing after some mirage instead of being practical and thinking about his wife:

> The peacock stretches its long neck in order to drink, of all rain drops, that particular one trembling on the tip of a blade of grass, which looks like a pearl pierced by an emerald-green needle.

Another example is verse 462:

> Satisfied and motionless, the bees sit on top of the white waterlilies: they look like the knots with which the darkness sealed the flowers before it was chased away by the sun.
> Last night's love bouts seem to have left the lovers exhausted but content!

These three verses are also good examples of the secret language used in this poetry to deal with the subject of love and sex. It should

be noted that the cast of the *Sattasaī* is made up of the family, that is, husband, wife, her companion, her parents, and her in-laws. Within the family one does not openly show that one is in love or made love the night before. If a person cannot help showing it, he or she is not harshly rebuked or openly corrected. Usually, recourse is taken to teasing. Alternatively, the situation is presented with humour, as is the case in, for instance, verse 433:

> First she tried brushing, next she tried washing, and, when that did not help, she tried beating: the foolish wife did not know how to get rid of the marks of her husband's nails on her breasts.

II

Many of the scenes are set in the village, and feature its inhabitants, among them the ploughman, the farmer, the hunter, and the headman. Occasionally also forest people are described, such as the Pulindas. When these people occur it is often in the role of the proverbial fool or blunderer. They serve as a counterbalance to a category of more successful lovers. The latter type figures in verse 188, which describes a woman who is completely in charge of the situation and deftly deals with her unfaithful husband without suffering from it herself:

> By disentangling the hair of her husband, who had fallen down at her feet, from the clasp of her anklet, she made it clear (without saying one word) that her heart had not yet returned from its journey into the Land of Sulking.

This woman has her opposite in the Pulinda's wife, a tribal woman living on the slopes of the Vindhyas, depicted in 636:

> After she had seen her husband's lip which was swollen by a bee sting the Pulinda's wife, burning with jealousy, walked away from him and stood in the shade of another tree.

Apart from the fact that the woman failed to notice the presumably obvious (!) difference between a lip swollen by a bee sting and one hurt from vehement kisses, the point of the verse seems to lie basically in the primitive way in which she gives vent to her anger,

namely, by refusing to share any longer with her husband the shade of the same tree.

The proverbial nature of the villagers' stupidity becomes clear in verse 643, in which the farmer figures in a comparison:

> Honey bee, how stupid you are to leave the lotus for sake of the ripe, aromatic woodapple. But you will discover your mistake when you touch it, just like that farmer who tried to grab a sweetmeat in a painting.

Such stupidity proves disastrous in matters of love, as shown by verse 636 quoted above, and, again, by verse 360:

> The cotton, bent down by the burden of its half-opened pods, looks like people laughing, as the ploughman runs away from his wife, leaving her for dead, while she has merely lost consciousness in the ecstasy of their love-making.

III

But the love-life of the villagers is not hampered only by their stupidity. Another complication is the hard, exhausting work on the fields, which leaves them no energy to satisfy their wives:

> The farmer's wife, who failed to reach her climax as her husband had fallen asleep, exhausted from dragging the plough through the thick mud, cursed the rainy season.

However understandable her disappointment, the woman's reaction, cursing the rainy season, is foolish, because it is self-destructive, as the harvest, and with it the well-being of the family, depends on an abundant rainfall.

The theme of impossibility to combine love and work returns in the verses depicting the hunter. The hunter seems to have chosen in favour of his wife, but making his wife happy has exhausted him so much that he is no longer able to draw his bow. As a result he is forced to pare it more thin:

> Look! From the courtyard of the hunter's hut a whirlwind throws up a line of shavings from his bow. It looks like a flag proclaiming his wife's bliss (v. 120);

and as a result his arrows have lost the speed and the power required to kill an elephant:

> My son, who formerly needed no more than one arrow to turn the elephant-cow into a widow, is so completely devastated by the glances my daughter-in-law casts at him, that nowadays he has to take with him a whole quiverfull (v. 632).

Being no longer able to kill an elephant, the hunter has turned to meeker game:

> The hunter's wife walks amid her co-wives who are decked out with pearls taken from the skulls of elephants, flaunting a peacock feather on her ear (v. 173).

The young wife's pride is of course completely misplaced, as it is impossible to sustain the family by hunting peacocks. Moreover, marriage has made the hunter sentimental and because of that he is no longer fit for carrying out his profession:

> The doe, which had been set up as a decoy, glanced full of desire at the lonely stag so that the hunter, who had a loving wife himself, dropped his bow (v. 620).

A figure caught in a dilemma similar to that of the hunter is the wrestler:

> Woman, shouldn't you be ashamed instead of dancing, while the beating of the drum to celebrate your husband's victory in the wrestling-match proclaims your unhappiness in love (v. 687).

To this category also belong those poems which describe the wayfarer. The upkeep of his family forces the husband to travel through an inhospitable, sun-scorched country, and to leave behind his wife worrying about his fate and anxiously awaiting his safe return home.

IV

Many awkward situations arise because people have married the wrong partner. Where there is a winner, there also is a loser. Thus, while the poor tenant farmer has managed to marry the landholder's daughter, she, accustomed as she was to some measure of comfort and sophistication in her father's house, suffers greatly in her new environment:

> The ploughman does not understand a thing, not even slowly. His genteel wife is dying, but who can we tell, for in this wretched village there is no healer for her ills (v. 602).

The woman misses the bright conversation and jokes made in her father's house:

> Who should I glance at, who should I talk to about my pleasures and my griefs, who should I have fun with, in this dreary village full of yokels? (164).

The landholder himself fares no better. He has married the tenant farmer's daughter who, coming from a simple family, is lacking in sophistication, as becomes evident from the laborious way in which she, in the following verse, tries to attract her husband's attention:

> When the farmer's daughter saw her husband, the landholder's son, standing on top of the bank of the Godāvarī, she began to clamber upwards, deliberately choosing a steep and difficult path (107).

Compare the farmer's daughter's strategy with the primitive way in which the Pulinda woman referred to earlier expressed her anger, namely, by leaving her husband to stand in the shade of another tree.

In the hierarchy of village life the tenant farmer stands at the bottom. Above him he finds the landholder, and at the apex stands the village headman. In choosing a wife the latter is, however, not a whit better than the others. He has married the landholder's daughter, who frustrates her husband's ambition to be considered a real Kṣatriya. For she proves unable to fulfill his final wish, which is to have her add lustre to his funeral as a *satī:*

> The landholder's daughter extinguishes the fire, its flames already shooting up high, as she starts to sweat lying in the arms of her dearest husband at the occasion of following him into death (v. 407).

V

A considerable number of verses deal with the problems the wife encounters in her husband's household. After marriage the girl is to live with her in-laws. For them, however, she is just one more mouth to feed. She is expected not to embarrass the family with extravagant desires, which proves especially hard on her when she is pregnant and has to "eat for two" (*dohada*):

> The pregnant wife living in a poor man's household, when asked what she desired to eat, asked again for water, as she did not want to embarrass her husband (v. 472);

or:

> The poor man's pregnant wife, knowing the state of the household, kept her desires to herself, as she also does with the improper words addressed to her by her-in-laws (290).

This verse introduces yet another problem the young wife encounters in her new environment, namely, the sexual advances she has to endure from some members of her husband's family, notably her husband's younger brother:

> She does not complain about her brother-in-law's constant teasing, not because she has improper intentions herself, but because she fears to become the cause of a break-up of the household. But she cannot prevent her body from growing thin (59).

On top of that her mother-in-law keeps a close watch on her every movement, and, almost out of habit, finds fault with everything she does. Their relation comes to a crisis when the husband is away from home for a longer period. In these circumstances the mother-in-law doubles her watch over her son's wife, a fact which under no circumstances is to be misconstrued as selfless pity:

> The mother-in-law did not leave her daughter-in-law's side, who was actually close to dying after seeing the first rain-clouds appear in the sky, as if the girl was a precious elixir with which she could bring her son back to life (v. 336).

The mother-in-law's only concern is the well-being of the family, and the only thing which might move her in relation to her daughter-in-law is the fear that her son might actually have died on one of his travels. The following verse shows how things may deteriorate before the mother-in-law relents:

> The mother-in-law, who is usually angry at whathever her son's wife does, was moved to tears as the girl collapsed in front of her, seeing the bracelets slip from her arms (v. 493).

The verses discussed above of necessity cover only a small sample of the many situations depicted in the *Sattasaī*. In addition, one may find, for instance, verses which deal with the secret meetings of the lovers, or rather, with their frustrations at being unable to meet, with the husband's unfaithfulness and the woman's sulking, with the husband's absence from home and his failure to return in time before the rains have started, with the wife's grief on account of her husband's absence or his being delayed, and with the husband taking on a younger, second wife and his subsequent neglect of the first one. Together with the situations discussed above, these form the common stock of themes of all later erotic poetry, whether in Prākṛt or in Sanskrit. The *Sattasaī*, the earliest example of this literary genre, seems to have set the trend once and for all.

VI

As already discussed, the poetry of the *Sattasaī* was aimed at a sophisticated audience. The verses containing coded messages appealed in particular to this audience's intellectual capacities. The verses about the villagers seem to add to this an element of humour, or at least, we many assume that they also served to amuse the audience. It should be noted that the humour is occasionally of a very wry nature, as in the case of, for instance, verse 169:

> The poor farmer keeps hanging on in the fields, though nothing is left for him to do there. He does not go home, wishing to avoid the pain of an empty house after his wife's death.

Underlying this pathetic picture of the farmer is the idea that, if one can possibly afford it, one should have more than one wife. It should be noted, however, that the extent to which the poetry of the *Sattasaī* evokes the ideals of a leisured class of sophisticated, learned, and, above all, rich people is, literally, an ideal. Humour at the cost of a poor and foolish farmer can only be appreciated if it is realized that no one is excepted from being a fool once in a while, and that poverty is lying around the corner for everybody. The farmer and his likes are just the projections or surrogate scapegoats.

VII

The question then remains why this poetry was composed in this particular Prākṛt dialect, or why in a Prākṛt at all and not in Sanskrit? The second question is probably the easier one to answer. The verses imitate words spoken to oneself or to a close friend or relative about highly intimate matters. While, as the dramatic literature shows, Sanskrit is the language reserved for conversation about learned topics, Prākṛt is the language for ordinary conversation. But why then has this particular Prākṛt dialect been used, which of all Prākṛts appears to be the one removed furthest away from Sanskrit? In this connection it should be noted that the *Sattasaī* is the very first text which was composed in this dialect, which means that the origin of Mahārāṣṭrī as a literary dialect is, most likely, directly connected with this particular type of poetry. Given the fact that the scenes are set in the village among simple people it might well be possible that we have to do with an imitation of a rustic dialect. If so, it is interesting to see its subsequent career: this "rustic" dialect has become the most dominant of Prākṛt dialects, in that it has come to be used for epic poetry, as in the *Setubandha* and *Gauḍavaho*, and for narrative literature, notably by the Jainas.

Reference

* The *Sattasaī* is also known as *Gāthāsaptaśatī*, *Saptaśatī* or *Gāhakośa*. The numbers of the verses refer to the edition by A. Weber, *Ueber das Saptaśatakam*

des Hāla. AKM VII, 4. Leipzig 1881. Another good edition, especially because it includes the complete text of the commentary by Gaṅgādhara, is the one by Durgāprasād and Paṇṣīkar, Kāvyamālā 21 (Bombay 1911). Recently, an edition and translation have appeared of the (Jaina) version commented upon by Bhuvanapāla: *Hāla's Gāhākosa (Gāthāsaptaśatī) with the Sanskrit Commentary of Bhuvanapāla*, by M.V. Patwardhan, Part I (Ahmedabad 1980), Part II (Delhi 1988). A stemma of the many available manuscripts has been prepared by Herman Tieken, *Hāla's Sattasaī. Stemma and Translation (Gāthās 1-50), with Translation and Notes*. (Leiden 1983. Privately published and available from the author). As to translations, mention may be made of the one by M.V. Patwardhan (see above, Part II) and the one by Radhagovinda Basak, *The Prākrit Gāthā-saptaśati* (Calcutta 1971). For a recent poetic translation of a selection of poems, see Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, *The Absent Traveller: Prākrit Love Poetry from the Gāthāsaptaśatī of Sātavāhana Hāla* (Delhi 1991).

7

Classical Sanskrit Prose Literature

Saroja Bhate

Introduction

When we talk of classical Sanskrit literature we talk of *kāvya*. This is a wider designation selected by the Indian rhetoric tradition to cover all literary compositions which are works of the imagination and which, to be more precise, belong to the category of what we call *belles lettres*. The term *kāvya*, literally meaning 'poetry', thus includes 'non-poetic' compositions such as prose and drama. Therefore, when we deal with classical Sanskrit prose, we actually deal with prose-*kāvya*. This implies that, in Sanskrit, prose and poetry are not in contradistinction to each other. On the contrary, they are two modes of literary expression quite close to each other. They share all the essential characterisations of a literary composition. Prose (*gadya*) distinguishes itself from poetry (*padya*) by the non-use of metre. In all other respects they are on par. Versification is a mere outer apparel of poetry rather than a significant, distinct feature. Versification was, in fact, accepted as a convenient mode of composition, even by ancient writers of scientific treatises, as it was suitable for memorizing. Prose was, on the other hand, opted for by commentators on terse texts for writing expository commentaries. Apart from this non-literary option, both prose and poetry shared a common aim, namely, providing the highest aesthetic pleasure through fine embellishment and expression of subtle sentiments.

Notwithstanding this common aim, the classical Indian literary genius appears to have had a special predilection for poetry rather than prose. A casual glance at classical Sanskrit literature reveals that the great bulk of it consists of poetic compositions. Even the earliest records of literary works which have survived to this day are in the form of poetry. This preponderance of poetic literature is considered as due to the aptitude of the Sanskrit language itself with its extraordinary flexibility, sonorous character and adaptability to different sound combinations. Its suitability for any number of metrical patterns allured Indian literary artists to express themselves in rhythmic compositions. Poetry thus became the normal mode of literary expression. It was chosen as an easy and convenient style of composition even by authors of scientific treatises. An appeal for prose was made by experts in rhetorics like Vāmana who invited poets to compose in prose by declaring गद्यं कवीनां निकषं वदन्ति "prose is said to be the touchstone of literary artists." It appears from a look into the history of classical Sanskrit literature that this invitation received a not very encouraging response and, apart from a few outstanding prose works, literary activity in Sanskrit has always remained a 'poetic' activity'.

In spite of poetic lyricism dominating the history of Sanskrit literature, from the beginning the prose style was adopted for story-telling, the roots of which are to be found in the Brāhmaṇical literature of the Vedic period. The simple, artless prose used by the authors of the Brāhmaṇas of the Black *Yajurveda* is the first appearance of prose in Sanskrit literature. Later, prose for storytelling was opted for by Buddhist and Jain thinkers for the propagation of their respective religious tenets. Early existence of prose literature in Prākrit is indicated by inscriptions as well as by later references to the *Bṛhatkathā*, 'the great story', of Guṇāḍhya which was presumably composed in Prākrit prose before the Christian era and which is regarded as the first great narrative of India. Sanskrit inscriptions also developed a prose which was in conformity with the poetic style described and prescribed by rhetoricians. Rudradāman's inscription for instance is considered as an illustration of the Vaidarbhī style.

Literary prose in Sanskrit started in the period after Kālidāsa. It has contributed to tales, narratives and romance. A brief survey of the prose literature consisting of these three types is undertaken here.

Early Beginning

From times immemorial stories have occupied the human mind. Narratives, tales and fables form an important component of human culture. In Sanskrit literature our journey into this genre begins with the Vedic period and continues through the great epic, the *Mahābhārata* as well as the Purāṇas which provide interesting stories composed in prose mixed with verse. Although we have to travel a long way till we arrive at stories as literary compositions, we do come across during our journey into the past a few vestiges of the source of this type of literature.

It must be noted, to begin with, that the doctrine of metempsychosis, which implied the equality of animals and human beings, has played a significant role in the rise of fables the origin of which is to be sought already in works like the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (I. 12. IV. 1.5). The relief on the stupa of Bharhut indicates the existence of fables in the second century before Christ. Among the ancient grammarians, both Kātyāyana and Patañjali (belonging to the third and second centuries BC respectively) mention names of *Ākhyayikā* (narratives) such as *Vāsavadattā*, *Sumanottarā* and *Bhaimarathī*. Patañjali's reference to expressions like *kākatālīya* (the crow and the branch) and *ajākṛpāniya* (the sheep and the sword) is an evidence indicating the popularity of tales and fables during his period. Reference has already been made to the Buddhist and Jain story collections which appear to be the foremost attempts at collecting stories and putting them together in a literary form. *Jātakamālā* of Āryaśura, *Divyāvadāna* and *Cariyapitaka* are some of the examples of collections of stories written in simple prose mixed with verse.

Credit goes to Guṇādhya, a friend of king Satavāhana, for collecting the floating mass of stories and composing the work called *Bṛhatkathā*, 'the great story', in Paiśacī Prākrit which was to be the first of its kind. Although the original is lost and has therefore left a controversy as to whether it was composed in prose or poetry (Daṇḍin the well-known writer of the later period, hints that the original was in prose), the great popularity enjoyed by the work is evident from its mention along with the two great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* by later writers. It is claimed that *Bṛhatkathā* exerted influence through its poetic versions in the later period on Turkish and Persian literature. Thus, in spite of belonging to Prākrit literature and its doubtful form as a prose, *Bṛhatkathā*

deserves a mention in this survey of classical Sanskrit prose literature because of originating the genre later known as Kathā.

Pañcatantra

Almost at the same time when Guṇāḍhya was busy organizing the great mass of floating tales, another composition, which later came to be known as the *Pañcatantra* was taking shape. Although instruction by apologue, a characteristic of ancient Indian mentality, can be traced back to Brāhmaṇic literature, it is fully illustrated for the first time by the *Pañcatantra*. Historians often describe this work as the most largely circulated book around the world, next only to the Bible. It is, indeed, this work which brought the name of India on the map of world literature. The painstaking efforts of the western scholar Hertel have brought forth the interesting history of the worldwide transmission of this work. Hertel recorded as many as two hundred versions of the *Pañcatantra* in as many as fifty languages of the world.

Although the origin alongwith the authorship of this work is shrouded in mystery, the large number of the various recensions that have survived through the ages allow us to reconstruct the story of its journey throughout the country. Scholars have classified the available recensions of this work into four groups. To the first group belongs the lost source of that version in the Pahlavi language which was responsible for the spread of the work through the West. The lost source of the later versions which were incorporated into *Bṛhatkathā* retellings in poetry, the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, is known as the northwestern version. To the third group belongs the lost source on which the Kashmir version as well as the two Jain versions are based. Finally, the southern version and the Nepalese version are based on the lost source belonging to the fourth group. This variety of versions speaks for the immense popularity enjoyed by the work throughout the country.

This solitary surviving work of the beast fable is not a mere collection of stories but a craftily contrived composition of tales woven together in such as manner that one story emerges from the other. The process of emboxment of stories is a noteworthy contribution of the composer who is anonymous. The technique of a story within a story keeps the interest of the reader growing till the main story comes to an end. Another outstanding feature of the work is its didactic motive. It is said in the prologue of the book that

the stories are told by a pandit called Viṣṇuśarman to the four sons of a king who are blockheads in order to train them in the science of polity. The stories told in this work do not however, have a bearing on the science of polity alone. They teach what can be described as *dharma* in a wider sense to cover law, polity, ethics and commonsense wisdom in general. Here animals like bulls and lions, jackals and monkeys and crows play the role of human beings. The composer of the stories has made ingenious use of animal traits which could be equated with human traits.

The work presupposes the existence of a large bulk of floating tales from which the author selected a few. About 40 stories are emboxed in five *tantras* (meaning science of polity). In spite of political wisdom being the primary aim of the work, its popularity is due more to the interesting stories rather than the implicit lesson. They entertain more than teach morals. For instance, there is the story of the greedy jackal which, in spite of the food before it, tries to lick the blood on the bowstring of the dead hunter and gets transfixed. The touching story of a mongoose thoughtlessly killed by its owner, who sees blood around the cradle in which his child is sleeping and wrongly suspects the mongoose to be the killer of his child, has a sad note rather than a moral to teach.

All these stories are told in simple but elegant prose interspersed with gnomic stanzas. The epigrammatic verses teaching wordly wisdom are a part of the richest treasure of classical Sanskrit literature. They teach in very elegant manner how to behave in the world. The composer of the stories shows himself as a master of narratives possessing both wit and wisdom. The superfine network of the deep laid stories, the unparalleled skill in emboxing them and achieving unity, and the simple, forceful and lively prose accompanied by beautiful epigrammatic verses have won a unique position for the *Pañcatantra* in the history of world literature.

After the *Pañcatantra* there is a wide gap till we come to the middle ages. The period after the 10th century AD, which is described by historians as a decadent period, has again contributed to the literature of tales and fables. However, in between the *Pañcatantra* and this literature there arose a distinct genre of classical Sanskrit prose described as romance. The works of Bāṇabhaṭṭa, Subandhu and Daṇḍin, which belong to this type, have been a landmark in the history of Indian prose.

Bāṇabhaṭṭa

Bāṇabhaṭṭa, who belonged to the seventh century AD, is regarded as the greatest of the writers of the post-Kālidāsa period. He is credited with the pioneering effort to popularise a special literary style devoid of versification. He illustrated this in two works of outstanding literary merit, the *Kādambarī* and the *Harṣacarita*. The former is accepted as a model of the prose type *Ākhyāyikā*. Rudraṭa, a rhetorician of the 9th century has, in fact, tailored his definition of *Kathā* and *Ākyayikā* on these two works.

Kādambarī is the first novel in Sanskrit. Bāṇabhaṭṭa could not complete it and the half-completed story was carried to its consummation by his son, Bhūṣaṇa. One therefore wonders whether the story as it is told in the work was conceived in the same way by Bāṇa. This is a story of transmigration of love told, for the first time, as a first-hand narration. It is, in fact, a blend of two love stories, of Kādambarī and Candrāpīḍa, and of Mahāśvetā and Puṇḍarīka.

Characters like Candrāpīḍa and Vaiśampāyana appear in their second or third birth. The latter is transformed into a parrot who is the main narrator of the story. The mystery surrounding the complicated and very elaborately laid plot is cleared at the end.

Bāṇa's is a good example of poetry in prose. It contains all the features of poetry except versification. Bāṇa excells in flights of imagination and depiction of sentiments. The rhetoricians describe prose as that which consists of vigorous expressions and plenty of compounds (ओजः समासभूयस्त्वमेतद् गद्यस्य लक्षणम्). The prose style of this work aptly illustrates this definition. The forcefulness of the prose is evident in Bāṇa's long descriptions of nature. The picturesque and luxuriant imagery, the stately compounds, the swing and music in his expressions show Bāṇa as a great master of prose style. His command over the rich vocabulary of Sanskrit and skilful use of rolling compounds have won him a fame as a poetic genius. Notwithstanding the grandeur of his vivid and majestic expressions, the plot gets totally lost in the labyrinth of lengthy description and one has to strain the memory as well as the imagination to keep track of the story. A western scholar describes Bāṇa's prose as 'an Indian wood where all progress is rendered impossible by the undergrowth until the traveller cuts out a path for himself and where, even then, he has to reckon with malicious wild beasts in the shape of unknown words that affright him' (cited by M.R. Kale in his edition of the *Kādambarī* 1968, p. 34). An excerpt from the

Kādambari given at the end of this article illustrates Bāṇa's prose embellished with imageries and long compounds.

The *Harṣacarita* is yet another example which shows him as a forerunner of the literary genre called the historical novel. This is an unfinished biography of king Harṣavardhana of Thanesar (606-648 AD) who was Bāṇa's patron. It is, in fact a semihistorical romance and covers a very small part of Harṣa's life. It is more important for the depiction of contemporary social life. For the first time in the history of Sanskrit literature we come across a full account of a poet given by the poet himself. Although intended as a panegyric of Harṣa the work is more interesting for its elegant poetic style, vivid descriptions of nature, and of people belonging to different strata of society. Bāṇa's impression of Harṣa at the first sight is described in a sentence which covers as many as ten printed pages of a book! This work shows Bāṇa as a master of pen-pictures. His use of ornate puns and various figures of speech, splendid descriptions of flora and fauna, the animal and human life evince his perfect mastery over both sound and sense. He emerges from both works as a unique poet of Sanskrit who incorporated all the essential features of poetry into prose and performed the role of a pathsetter.

Subandhu

Subandhu, the author of the romance called *Vāsavadattā,* is highly praised by later poets for his skilful use of figures of speech. Although no final word is yet said about the interrelationship between Bāṇa and Subandhu, it is generally believed that Subandhu closely followed Bāṇa, not only in chronology but also in his composition. His *Vāsavadattā* is a work of fiction, having nothing in common with the ageold tale of Udayana and Vāsavadattā beyond the name. It is difficult to say whether he invented the plot or drew upon some lost source for the tale. However, he should be credited with making, for the first time, abundant use of tale-motifs such as magic steeds, dream-visions, voices in the air, parrots talking in human language and the transformation of a human into stone. The plot as such does not apear to be of any significance to the author himself who takes delights in lengthy descriptions of personages and of natural events in words equiped with double meaning. The work is used by him for exhibiting his poetic skill as well as his pedantry. Although as compared to Bāṇa Subandhu shows a lack of the power of imagination, at times he rises to the height of a great

poet by the use of majestic compounds and skilful use of paronomasia. However, the exuberance of ornaments both in language and meaning, which goes out of proportion considering the slender plot, mars the original beauty of the work. Yet the novel has left a considerable impression upon later tradition as is indicated by a good number of commentaries on it.

Daṇḍin

Daṇḍin is the most illustrious star in the galaxy of writers of ornate fiction in Sanskrit. The questions about the identity of Daṇḍin, the author of the romance called *Daśakumāracaritam*, with the rhetorician Daṇḍin, the author of *Kāvyādarśa*, and about his chronology have remained unsolved till today. It is argued by some scholars that Daṇḍin, the author of the romance, was thoroughly acquainted with Bāṇabhaṭṭa. The *Daśakumāracaritam* is a story of the adventure of ten princes, Rājavāhana being the hero among them. It recounts the reunion of these princes who grew up together, after a long time of separation caused by their setting out to win their fortunes. The story ends with the hero regaining his kingdom with the help of his friends. The plot appears to be borrowed from fable literature. Unfortunately, the text has not been preserved intact. Both the beginning and the end are lost. Seven out of ten stories, and the beginning of the eighth have survived the ravages of time. The *Pūrvapīṭhikā* (preface) which is, in all probability, written by a different person, contains, in addition to the introduction, the stories of the first two princes. The diversity of episodes, the wide range of characters appearing in them, and the picturesque description of colourful events have led different scholars to label the work differently; for example, it is described as a romance that can rank with the best picaresque romances of Europe, as a knave's fiction or as amoral fiction. Indeed, here we are in a different world, the world of thieves, buffoons, rogues, gamblers and bawds. We encounter prostitutes and unfaithful wives, crooked ascetics and hypocritical priests. Some of the adventures may remind us of the tales of Robin Hood. The work has, therefore, a great value as a source-book on ancient Indian culture with special reference to the world of the common people. Daṇḍin has deliberately violated the principal that a literary piece should have a noble hero with good character. On the contrary, 'immorality rather than morality is its deliberate theme' as observed by one scholar.

The stories are told in elegant prose decked with glittering imageries and proportionate compounds. The author emerges as a master of vigorous and elegant prose. In spite of the restrained use of poetic features in his prose, Daṇḍin could not resist the temptation of exhibiting the height of his technical skill. Thus the complete narrative of Mantragupta, whose lips have been made sore by the passionate kisses of his fiancée, is told in a language devoid of labial letters! Tradition appreciated the magnificent beauty of his expressions (*daṇḍinaḥ padalālityam,* the beauty of words used by Daṇḍin, is well known'). Because of the matter and manner in perfect match with each other, the gay colours pleasantly shining throughout the descriptions and the journey along an untrodden path, the *Daśakumāracaritam* has a special place in the history of Sanskrit literature.

Before we rest at the last milestone of our journey we may have a glimpse of relatively less important prose literature. Firstly, there were attempts to emulate great authors like Bāṇa and secondly, a new genre in prose emerged. For instance, Dhanapāla composed his romance called *Tilakamañjarī* in the tenth century. This novel with an ordinary love story as its theme is a blind imitation of *Kādambarī*. *Udayasundarīkathā* is a tale told in eight chapters by Soḍḍhala sometime in the eleventh century. In the later centuries *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* of Merutunga, *Prabandhakośa* of Rājaśekhara Suri and *Bhojaprabandha* of Ballāla are a few examples of semi-historical novels which followed the *Harśacarita*. All these works are poor imitations of the prototypes handled by incompetent writers and deserve only a passing reference.

Campū

Sometime in the tenth century a new genre called *campū* developed as a midway between prose and poetry. A *campū* is defined as a composition in prose and poetry mixed together. Rhetoricians like Daṇḍin describe this type; but the proportion of prose and poetry with each other was fixed neither in theory nor in practice. The first specimen of this type belongs to the tenth century. From the number of available *campūs* it appears to have been a popular type of composition. However, barring a few exceptions all *campūs* are of mediocre quality. In the *Nalacampū* of Trivikramabhaṭṭa, which is the earliest work of this type, a deliberate attempt to imitate the great poets of an earlier period is seen. Somadeva, the author of the

Yaśastilakacampu is a Jain poet of high merit belonging to the tenth century. His poetic genius is, however, overshadowed by his ardent religious faith. A few other *campūs* followed in the wake of the *Yaśastilakacampū* and were used for the propagation of religious sects. Themes from the stories of Rāma and Krishṇa were selected for writing *campūs*. In addition to *Bhāratacampū* and *Rāmāyaṇcampū* we have *Viśvaguṇa darśacampū* of Venkateśa of Tirupati. This *campū* is noteworthy for deviation from the trodden path by introducing elements of wit and satire. On the whole however, *campū* literature does not rise to any outstanding level.

Narratives

Historians of Sanskrit literature remark that the real creative period of Sanskrit literary activity came to an end in the tenth century. What followed was a decadent period characterised by poetry of a very inferior quality. However, in contrast to poetry the prose literature of this period (between the tenth and the eighteenth centuries) is marked by the development of interesting story books which enjoyed immense popularity. One of the most pcpular tales, next only to the *Pañcatantra* and the *Bṛhatkathā*, is the *Vetālapancaviṁśatī* by an unknown author. This is a collection of 25 tales told to king Trivikramasena by a ghoul entered into a corpse. Every story ends in a riddle to be solved by the king. The king succeeds every time but the ghoul escapes as a result of the contract with the king to that effect. Finally, the king is victorious because he is able to kill the ascetic who wants to dethrone him. The stories in this book were so appealing to the people that the text was circulated throughout the country and underwent several redactions. It is available in divergent versions. The version of Jambhaladatta (14th century) is almost in prose. This set of 25 emboxed stories has retained its popularity even today, and is already translated into almost all Indian languages. Written in simple but lively prose; it has created a record in being the most popular book of the middle ages in India.

Next in the line follows the *Siṁhāsanadvātriṁśatikā*, probably belonging to the thirteenth century. This work is available in two recensions, the northern and the southern. It is the story of king Bhoja who is prevented from ascending the throne of Vikramāditya by the thirty-two statues of maidens supporting it. Each one of the statues comes to life and narrates the story of the greatness of

Vikramāditya, the original owner of the throne, and tells Bhoja to ascend the throne only if he has the same qualities. Although the stories told in this cycle are less imaginative, they are significant because they contain some ethical lessons. This work can be described as a good illustration of the use of the story for moral instruction. The prose is simple and less ornamental. It makes the journey through the stories easy and comfortable.

The *Śukasaptati*, 'seventy tales told by a parrot', is a more lively cycle of attractive stories. Probably belonging to the thirteenth century this work is available in two recensions, one by a Jain preacher and the other, by Cintamaṇi Bhaṭṭa. While the former is written in a simple artless prose the latter is more embellished. Here we have a collection of seventy stories told by a pet parrot to the mistress of the house who wants to go to some other person to console herself in the absence of her husband. Every night the parrot keeps her engaged in listening to a story about a women facing difficulty while meeting her paramour, and thus persuades her from going out. Seventy nights pass in listening to the tales and the wife is kept engaged in thinking about the solutions to the difficulties faced by the women who feature in them. Finally, her husband returns and the parrot is thus successful in its mission. This book contains many interesting stories of naughty, unfaithful wives who cheat their husband to the extent of making them feel guilty of being suspicious of their wives' infidelity.

The genre of story cycles continued in the subsequent period though the standard came down both in respect of content and style. *Bharaṭakadvātriṁśatikā*, of an unknown author and date, is a collection of thirty-two stories told to ridicule the Bharaṭakas, who were probably Śaiva ascetics. In spite of an interesting theme the style of narration does not make an interesting reading. Equally mediocre in quality is the *Puruṣaparīkṣā* of Vidyāpati of the fourteenth century which consists of forty-four tales describing the qualities of a man. Finally, it is interesting to note that the Jain contribution to this type of prose literature has been very substantial although the literary merit is not very distinct. Often stories with good possibilities are spoilt by forced in religious morals.

Conclusion

The bird's-eye view of classical Sanskrit prose presented in the foregoing pages should be enough to convince us of the great

significance of this literature in spite of its relatively small volume. It may be remarked that the traditional Indian concept of *kāvya*, which made prose a kind of poetry, is responsible for arresting the growth of genuine prose in Sanskrit. Simple, vigorous and colloquial prose hardly makes its appearance in prose works, because it was always regarded as subservient to poetry. Since prose shared with poetry all its distinct features including musical cadence, we come across works written in an ornate sytle. Secondly, even the earliest available prose works are mixed with poetry. While poetry was a more spontaneous expression of literary artists, prose had an artificiality about it. Except for a few works like the *Pañcatantra* and the *Daśakumāracaritam*, prose literature appears to be a laboured creation of the poet, a vehicle for exhibiting his power of imagination as well as scholarship. Even the flow of great stories like *Kādambarī* is often hampered by lengthy descriptions.

Loyalty to earlier patterns, which is a characteristic of Sanskrit poetic genius in general, is not absent in this class of literature. Each genre has, for instance, produced a prototype which is almost blindly imitated by posterity. There are very few instances of a desire to overstep the trodden path.

Great relief is however provided by the colourful stories which were widely circulated and were thus responsible for keeping alive the tradition of Sanskrit literature. Although the story element in these works is often overshadowed by the religious interest of the writer, the story cycles created during this period did contribute to the continuation of the tradition.

Note

Here is a passage from the *Kādambarī* of Bāṇa (उज्जयिनीवर्णनम्-description of the city Ujjain.) This description runs over one and a half printed page. Some part of it is produced below.

अस्ति सकलत्रिभुवनललामभूता, प्रसवभूमिरिव कृतयुगस्य आत्मनिवासोचिता भगवता महाकालाभिधानेन भुवनत्रयसर्गस्थितिसंहारकारिणा प्रमथनाथेनापरेव पृथिवी समुत्पादिता .....प्रकटशङ्खशुक्तिमुक्ताप्रवालमरकतमणिराशीभिश्चामीकरचूर्णवालुकानिकरनिचितैरायामिभिरगस्त्यपरिपीतसलिलैः सागरैरिव महाविपणिपथैरूपशोभिता सुरासुरसिद्धगन्धर्वविद्याधरोरगाध्यासिताभि श्चित्रशालाभिरविरतोत्सव प्रमदावलोकनकुतूहलादम्बरतलावतीर्णाभिर्दिव्यविमानपङ्क्तिभिरिवालङ्कृता . . . . .सशैलेव प्रासादैः, सशाखानगरेव महाभवनैः सकल्पवृक्षेव सत्पुरुषैः, दर्शितविश्वरूपेव चित्रभित्तिभिः, संध्येव पद्मरागानुरागिणी . . . रक्तवर्णापि सुधाधवला अवलम्बितमुक्ताकलापापि विहारभूषणा बहुप्रकृतिरापि स्थिर विजितामरलोकद्युतिरवन्तीषूज्जयिनी नाम नगरी।

Translation: There is in the country of Avanti, a city called Ujjayinī which has become an ornament of all the three worlds; which is, as if the birthplace of the *kṛtayuga,* as if a second earth created by Pramathanātha, the lord of Pramatha (Cupid), called Mahakāla, convenient for his stay; decorated with long and wide market-roads which appear like oceans with their waters drunk by sage Agastya and exposing heaps of conches, oyster-shells, pearls, corals and emeralds stacked with gold dust and gravel heaps; decked with picture-galleries full of paintings of gods, demons, siddhas, gandharva, Vidyādharas and Nāgas, (the galleries) looking like a fleet of aerial cars descended from heaven with an intense desire to see the fair ladies always engaged in festive activities; as if full of hills on account of big mansions, as if containing large suburbs on account of many buildings, as if possessing wish-granting trees on account of virtuous people, as if exhibiting the form of the entire world an account of painted walls, as if twilight on account of being coloured by rubies, white-like nectar although red in colour; without ornaments although with hanging pearl ornaments; firm although with many *prakritis* (people), and which has won the splendour of the world of gods.

8

Public Poetry in Sanskrit

Sheldon Pollock

I

For more than a millennium, and over an expanse of space that stretched from the environs of Kabul to Prambanan on the plains of central Java, Sanskrit poets covered the world with poetry.[1] If one were alive in the year 1000, one would have seen public poems in Sanskrit engraved everywhere, on the sides of village tanks or step-wells or modest shrines, on the ubiquitous copper-plate grants recording royal gifts, on vast stone pillars or walls looming up from gigantic architectural wonders on Mount Abu in Gujarat, Gangakondacolapuram in Tamil Nadu, or Angkor in Cambodia. Sanskrit poets—not necessarily "Indian" poets but poets who wrote in Sanskrit—created a world like no other, a world thoroughly saturated with poetry.

The story of how this all came about, how Sanskrit travelled this vast distance, how it came to be used for public poetic texts, and what these texts are like, has never been told in the detail and with the care it merits. It is not in fact even clear whether it has been recognized that there is a story to tell. There are a number of factors for this neglect. For one thing, the assumption seems almost commonplace that Sanskrit had always, to one degree or another,

been used for poetry—or rather, that what came to be called poetry, *kāvya*, had always been written in Sanskrit—and so scholars have failed to give due attention to the historical process in the growth of Sanskrit, especially public Sanskrit poetry, that we actually have the evidence to trace. For another thing, virtually all modern readers of these public poems have been uninterested in them as texts, and have only used them as documents to be mined for reconstructing the economic or social or political history of southern Asia. These histories of course ask important questions, but one could argue that what has been ignored in their favour is the defining feature of these inscriptions, namely, their literariness. Not only has some very good, at times wonderfully moving, poetry often unlike anything else available in the language thereby been lost to modern readers, but our sense of what poetry meant in the social and political domains of many communities in this part of the world has perforce remained rudimentary. For if we do not ask, as we have not yet asked, why every man who came to rule—and not just rulers, but many others who sought the distinction of self-presentation in some permanent public form—found it desirable or indeed necessary to express himself in Sanskrit poetry, we are missing something central to the ways and visions of life in southern Asia before modernity.

II

As every student of Indian culture knows, the world of public texts in the subcontinent largely begins with the Prākrit inscriptions of Aśoka, around 275-50 before the common era. (I say "largely" because it has recently been argued that certain old Tamil cave inscriptions in the Brāhmī script may narrowly predate the Aśokan texts). What is not often realized is that for the entire following period of nearly *four hundred years* not only are no literary inscriptions produced in Sanskrit but there are only a handful of inscriptions in Sanskrit altogether, and of these a mere two or three were issued from royal courts. The half-dozen or so Sanskrit documents that have been discovered to date are very exiguous, and are used exclusively to record a sacral event, the establishment of a ritual precinct, a sacrificial post-memorial (*yūpa*), or the like. All other public texts, of which we have a great number both from the Sātavāhana world in the Deccan (*ca.* 230 BCE - 230 CE) and that of the

Kuṣāṇa in the north (from about 50 BCE to *ca*. 250 CE), are composed in various forms of middle Indic. What this evidence suggests is assuredly not that "standard" Sanskrit was obsolescent let alone unknown but that its use in the public or *laukika* domain was scrupulously avoided or, if used at all, then in a highly restricted manner. Indeed, I think there is reason to believe that the use of Sanskrit for poetry as such—again more correctly, what would come to be known as poetry, that is, *kāvya*—may have been avoided, too.

The state of affairs as we can read them off the epigraphical record for these four centuries seems to be substantially corroborated by what else we know of the growth of Sanskrit culture. A great deal of evidence points to the restriction of Sanskrit, from early on, to the domain of sacral activity and its ancillary knowledges (its special propriety for the liturgical sphere is certainly the primary connotation of its very name), and this is the inference to which we are led by such historical events as the Buddhist rejection of Sanskrit in favour of non-hieratic "vernacular" languages. As for *kāvya* in Sanskrit we have great difficulty discovering any of it before the beginning of the common era. The single text that actually cites such poetry is the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali, which provides us with a dozen half- or quarter-line quotations. The problem here is that it is not easy to date Patañjali's work with any real confidence. If we ask what Sanskrit poets have remembered and memorialized about the beginnings of their own tradition; if, for example, we comb through later poetic eulogies in Sanskrit texts—for from the time of Bāṇa if not earlier it becomes the fashion to preface one's literary creation with a praise of poets past (*kavipraśaṃsā*)—we will discover that no Sanskrit poet transmits the name of any poet we can securely place before the beginning of the common era.

The sole exception, of course, is Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. But here, I think, we may want to take seriously the work's own self-presentation as something unprecedented in the cultural history of India. Although so far as I can tell from the manuscripts collected for the critical edition, the text does not use the term "first poem" (*ādikāvya*) in reference to itself (this seems to be a somewhat later tradition, though one whose origins are hard to pinpoint), it does claim novelty. The *Rāmāyaṇa* sees itself as inventing the first formally ordered—versified and regularized (*pādabaddha, akṣarasama*)—linguistic representation of *everyday human experience* (clearly coded

in Vālmīki's celebrated etymology, *śokārtasya pravṛtto me śloko bhavatu*). Although it is notoriously difficult to determine the date of what may be termed the "monumental" version of the text (the term by which I refer to the work that synthesized earlier versions and gave a kind of grand shape to the narrative as a whole, and that the tradition has attributed to Vālmīki), most level-headed scholarship today favours the later Śuṅga world, or around the first century before the common era.

Now, something quite breathtaking happens around this time, or within a few generations. The transformation is signalled by a grand inscription—originally eleven by five feet in size—on the rock face at Mount Girnar in Gujarat. It is juxtaposed to a number of Aśokan edicts from the middle of the third century BCE, and to an inscription of King Skandagupta of 458 CE. The huge rounded granite boulder speaks seven hundred years of Indian cultural history, but it is the *praśasti* or eulogistic poem (a prose poem, in this case) from the court of the Kṣatrapa king Rudradāman, dated to 150 CE, that I want to focus on here. The king uses the occasion of his repair of a great public waterworks, the reservoir called Sudarśana that had been damaged in a storm, to compose a Sanskrit poem celebrating his own political and cultural achievements.

> . . . the water, churned by a furious storm, like the storm at the end of time,
> leveled the hills, uprooted trees and tore down embankments,
> turrets, towers, shelters—scattered and broke to pieces (. . .)
> and the stones and trees and shrubs and vines lay strewn about everywhere . . .
>
> He who from the womb possessed the splendour of consummate royalty,
> to whom all castes resorted and chose as their lord;
> he who vowed—a vow he kept—to take no life except in battle (. . .)
> but never hesitates to strike an equal foe who faces him in combat;
> he who rules as lord of eastern and western Ākaravanti, Anūpa country, Ānarta,
> Saurāṣṭra, Śvabhara, Maru, Kachcha, Sindhusauvīra, Kukura,
> Aparānta, Niṣāda, and other areas gained by his valor,
> and everywhere—town, market, countryside—

is untouched by trouble from robbers, snakes, wild beasts, or disease. . .
he who (composes) prose and verse, clear and pleasant, sweet and charming,
adorned with figures and stamped by proper use of language;
whose body is beautiful and marked with most excellent marks and signs . . .
He, Mahākṣatrapa Rudradāman . . . by a vast sum of money from his own treasury and in good time, strengthened the dam and lengthened it,
three times greater than before (. . .)
and far more beautiful now has Lake Beautiful become.

The text of this inscription has been known for more than a century and a half, since James Prinsep first published it in 1838. What I think may not yet have been adequately appreciated, however, is the fact that in all the hundred and fifty years since Prinsep—a period that has witnessed an intensive hunt for inscriptions throughout South Asia, issuing in forty-two volumes of *Epigraphia Indica*, eight volumes of *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, and countless other reports of inscriptional finds from archaeological investigations around the subcontinent—virtually nothing has been discovered to diminish the cultural-historical significance of Rudradāman's work. (The one exception may be the Mora stepwell inscription published by Lüders in 1937-38, but this pushes back by only a few generations the transition to public Sanskrit whose invention, I want to argue, constitutes a new moment in South Asian cultural history).

The appropriation of Sanskrit for purposes that are *political* and *public* around the beginning of the common era, as evidenced in the materials I adduce above, is an event that, whether as symptom or cause, announces a radical transformation of the historical sociology of Sanskrit. In this process newly settled immigrants from northwestern India, the Kṣatrapas, seem to participate centrally. The outstanding French scholar Louis Renou may have been right to argue years ago that it is likelier "foreign" kings consecrated rather than originated the vogue of literary Sanskrit, and others have reminded us that their use of public Sanskrit may be more a concomitance with other developments rather than a cause of them. Yet the evidence we actually possess suggests that others may be

right to find in the Kṣatrapas an innovating force. But what I find to be really historically important is not so much that newcomers from Iran and Central Asia should begin to participate in the prestige economy of Sanskrit, since other communities over time had been easily incorporated into Indian, indeed Sanskrit cultural communities, but rather that they and others begin to turn Sanskrit into an instrument of polity and the mastery of Sanskrit into a source of political charisma.

This is very new, and I think we must be clear about this novelty. When one scholar, in a recent census of some Kṣatrapa inscriptions, remarks on the "prestige that the Indian civilization of Madhyadeśa had for these tribal chiefs of Swat", we might be led to assume that these "tribal chiefs" just pick up "Indian civilization" as if it were lying about already full-formed. What happens instead, I think, is that they helped to create this civilization by employing Sanskrit in a way that earlier would have been unimaginable. They make political poetry—and public poetry—in a language that had never been used for that purpose. Never before had a king in India spoken (or been made to speak) publicly in the voice of Sanskrit *kāvya*. And after this point for the next thousand years, this is the voice that would be dominant in South and Southeast Asia.

III

The speed with which and the distances to which, after the second century, the new habit of composing public poetry in Sanskrit spread through the world, and the particular factors that seem to have been at work in this process, seem to me to constitute a cultural transformation comparable to no other in world history.

As I have noted, prior to the innovations around the first or second century CE, virtually all public records besides a few inscriptions commemorating sacrifical events were composed in one or another form of Prākrit. I use the term "records" here in the strict sense. Prākrit-language records do not, as I will suggest the Sanskrit texts strive to do, *interpret* the world; they simply intend to *document* it or even to establish it (for example, by declaring the boundaries of a land grant). Accordingly, not a single one of them is versified—versification being one of the markers, though by no means an exclusive marker, of expressivity in a text—and only one or two of them, from the Sātavāhana kingdom, could be said to be

prose poetry. Sanskrit public poetry begins with the prose poetry of Rudradāman's inscription. Versified poetry (leaving aside the Mora step-well inscription mentioned earlier, which has more to do with an earlier sacral use of the language than with the habit that replaced it) begins to appear from about the end of the third century, with the Kānākherā stone inscription of Śrīdharavarman (who describes himself as *mahādaṇḍanāyakena śakena,* "a Scythian appointed as regional governor"). In northern India, Sanskrit once adopted utterly displaces all other local languages from the realm of inscriptional discourse after the fourth century; it alone becomes the language used both for documenting and interpreting the world. In the South, where as we shall see Sanskrit divides up its linguistic labour with local languages, the latter are excluded from the domain of the poetic, until such time (variously in the ninth-eleventh centuries) as political-cultural conditions allow or demand otherwise.

It is striking how quickly Sanskrit, once it comes to be used for public poetry in the north in the second-third century, is adopted elsewhere. Prākrit is abandoned, and abandoned permanently, in northern India after around 300. In the upper Deccan among the Vākāṭakas, the last Prākrit inscription dates from 355 CE. In the case of the Ikṣvāku kings of Andhra, who succeeded the Sātavāhana dynasty abut 225 CE, the first forty of their records are in Prākrit; three Sanskrit texts appear only later, the likely date being the fourth century. Further south, in Tamil Nadu, the picture is even clearer, since we can trace the linguistic preferences of the Pallavas continuously over a 600-year period. Their records begin near the end of the third century with documents in Prākrit (a rather peculiar kind of Prākrit, in fact). This remains the fashion until the end of the century, when Sanskrit is adopted, never to be abandoned (indeed, there is no going back to Prākrit anywhere for the purpose of public discourse). One last example is furnished by the Kadambas of western Karnataka. They continue to write public documents in Prākrit through the middle of the fourth century; by the middle of the next, however, they move irreversibly to Sanskrit.

At the same time that this turn to Sanskrit for the creation of a public poetry is taking place in the Indian subcontinent—in fact, with striking simultaneity—we find the same thing happening in what are now the nations of Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia (Sumatra, Borneo and Java).

Sanskrit culture, in a real sense, is being created in different if closely related ways in North India, South India, and Southeast Asia at virtually the same time. And while the culture of Sanskrit public poetry dies out rather quickly in Burma, somewhat more slowly in Thailand and Champa (south Vietnam), it continues to be produced for centuries elsewhere: the last dated Sanskrit inscription in Cambodia, for instance, is around 1295 CE, a little before the abandonment of Angkor. In Java, royal texts in Sanskrit are produced in some quantity until the ninth century, though they are occasionally found as late as the middle of the fifteenth.

I want to elaborate on a point made briefly above that once Sanskrit became a language for the public and poetic expression of political will, it remained for many centuries the only language used for that purpose. When other languages are permitted to speak in the public domain, so to put it, it is only to document and specify. In the north, in fact, "local" languages are never granted even this permission, except at the beginning and the end of the epoch of Sanskrit: The last Prākrit inscription of the Vākāṭakas (355 CE) is a good example of the fashion that will be maintained elsewhere if not in the north. Here, the genealogical portion, which is not quite "interpretative" but still rhetorical, is composed in Sanskrit, the business portion, concerning a grant of land to a number of Brāhmaṇas, is in Prākrit (One thing this record shows, by the way—and this is something we find in many other places throughout this era—is that by this period the fashion of Sanskrit is pan-social, there no longer remains any necessary concomitance between Brāhmaṇism and Sanskrit, or non-brāhmaṇism and Prākrit. The sole concomitance has to do with *discursive purposes*—Sanskrit for expressivity, even where Buddhists are concerned, as the occasional Sanskrit public text from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa shows; Prākrit for documentation, even where brāhmaṇas are concerned—rather than with what once may have been social-linguistic communities). For perhaps a thousand years from this point on, local languages in the north will be banished from the royal public record. At the end of this period, a change in sensibilities occurs in the north, a growing awareness that the Sanskrit epoch is over. One of the first texts I have found that registers this change is a Mewar inscription of AD 1489: "In accordance with the king's command, we now write a few lines in our regional language, which is easily understandable to those not skilled in the gods' speech" (*gīrvāṇavāṇyām avicakṣaṇair*

narais sukhāvaseyāni vacāṃsi kānicit/sadeśabhāṣām [read: *svadeśabhāṣām*] *anusṛtya bhūpater anujñayā lekhapathaṃ nayāmahe* 11).

Even more eloquent about the poetic privileging of Sanskrit is the inscriptional record in South India. Despite its ancient literary history Tamil is not admitted at all into the Pallava public record until the middle of the sixth century, or two hundred years after the founding of the dynasty; even then, it is used exclusively for the pragmatic portions of the grant, its practical contents. Throughout the 600 year existence of the Pallava dynasty, not a single inscription in Tamil was produced that does anything but the work of documenting the everyday—announcing a remission of taxes, specifying the boundaries of a land-grant, acknowledging the receipt of goods, recording the transaction of a village council, registering the sale of land. Only with the Colas in the early eleventh century will Tamil take on tasks beyond the pragmatic. The same holds true in the world of Kannada. Neither the Kadambas nor the western Gangas nor the Bādāmī Cālukyas use Kannada for anything but documentary purposes; it is not until the middle of the tenth century, with Krishna III of the Raṣṭrakūṭa dynasty, that Kannada has a literary role to play. (The reasons for this development, what I call the vernacularization of southern polities, are the subject of another essay.)

In Southeast Asia, the world of public poetry remains a world of Sanskrit. Although old Khmer is found along with Sanskrit in dated inscriptions from the very beginning of recorded literacy in the country (early seventh century), it is used only to detail the concrete terms or conditions of royal grants. Old Javanese does not appear in public documents until the early ninth century, or at least 400 years after the first documents; after that date, and very quickly, Javanese becomes increasingly and then exclusively the language used in official documents. But the inscriptional materials in Old Javanese are virtually without exception documentary and not interpretative texts. This is even more striking in view of the existence, from the tenth century on, of a brilliant literary efflorescence in the language, the so-called *kakawin* (*kāvya*) literature (such literized poetry seems to be absent in Cambodia until well after the end of Angkor).

IV

Not only does the spread of political Sanskrit happen with extraordinary speed and over a vast space, but, as I mentioned, it also happens in a way that seems to me to be quite without parallel in world history.

First, no organized political power such as the Roman imperium underwrote the conquest of Sanskrit. There occurred no internal or external Indian "colonization", in any remotely acceptable use of that term, of South India or Southeast Asia. There were no demographically meaningful migrations of the subjects of any Indian polity, no military conquests, no ties of political subservience, no material dependency or exploitation of which we have even a shred of evidence. Second, Sanskrit was carried by no coherent scripture-based religion such as Islam; no religious revolution took place during this period with any vast or systematic proselytization of this space following in its wake. Quite the contrary, Sanskrit's diffusion was effected, it seems, by small numbers of traditional intellectuals, often following in the train of scattered groups of traders and adventurers, and carrying with them, besides the full panoply of Sanskrit cultural monuments such as grammars, lexicons, epics, and courtly poems—all of which make themselves felt in the poetic inscriptions themselves—the disparate and decidedly uncanonized texts of a wide variety of competing religious orders.

Third, there is no evidence whatever that Sanskrit ever became a language-of-trade—a bridge language or link language, a koiné language or lingua franca—like other imperial languages such as Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Chinese. During this period I find nothing to suggest that, outside the scholastic arena, Sanskrit was ever an everyday medium of communication in South Asia let alone Southeast Asia. Fourth, and closely related to this, we have no reason to believe that Sanskrit ever functioned as a language-of-state—if by that we mean the administrative functions of a language, e.g., the medium of chancellery communication—certainly not in Southeast Asia, almost certainly not in South India. What is created in the period that covers roughly the millennium between 300-1300 is a cultural formation that seems anomalous in antiquity, a kind of "community" without intensive communion, globalized as any culture before modernity was, based largely on a shared, if locally inflected, commitment to certain features of culture, which I have

taken to calling the Sanskrit cosmopolis, or Sanskrit cultural ecumene.

But if none of the conditions usually required for the spread of a linguistic medium and idiom obtains in the case of Sanskrit, what does account for it? And what cultural work did the ubiquitous public poetic texts of Sanskrit *do*?

Here we confront one of the more profound questions of Indian cultural history, and at present I can do no more than offer a set of hypotheses. One place to start is by recognizing that Sanskrit became a key feature in a widely shared repertory of culture in a peculiar kind of empire system of premodernity. In the system of nation-states of modernity, the structure of the system itself produces a number of cultural effects: one cannot, for example, have a "nation" as currently understood without at the same time having a singular language in which to represent it, and thus the elevation and standardization of one dialect are systemic features of nationalism. Similarly, in the empire-system of premodernity, at least as it seems to have operated in much of South and Southeast Asia, imperial culture and self-understanding—in a word, the ability to qualify as imperial polity—required demonstrated mastery of a language of cosmopolitan character. This had to be a language of *transethnic* attraction, transcending even the ethno-identity of the ruling elites themselves. It had to be a language capable of making *translocal* claims (beyond the local claims that were within the province of *deśabhāṣā)* of what has insightfully been called "limited universal sovereignty." It had to be a language powerful not so much because of its numinous qualities (I find little in the epigraphs we actually possess to suggest that Sanskrit was prized because of its supposed transcendent character; it is certainly false to assert, as some do, that the audience of public poetry was the gods!), but because of its aesthetic qualities, its ability somehow to make reality more real—more complex and more beautiful—as evinced by its literary idiom and style, and a literary history that embodies successful exemplars of such linguistic alchemy.

It had, moreover, to be a language dignified and stabilized by grammar. Only in such a language, and not one unconstrained by grammar and therefore constantly in danger of degenerating, could the fame of the ruler expect to receive permanent, indeed, eternal expression. But there is more to grammaticality than just this kind of simple quasi-functionalism, something deeper rooted. In a way,

the order of Sanskrit poetry was the order of Sanskrit grammar—the greatest linguistic achievement in all antiquity, and perhaps since—and that order was a model or prototype of the moral, social and political order. A just (*sādhu*) king was a king who used and promoted the use of correct language (*sādhuśabda*), in the same way that, to appeal to the great philosopher Kumārila in his critique of Pāli Buddhism, it is only by using a language whose form is true (*sad*) that one can possibly speak the truth (*satya*). Not only was Sanskrit thus the appropriate vehicle for the expression of royal will, but Sanskrit learning itself became a crucial component of kingliness. This trope of the learned king is very widespread and long-standing. We can trace it from Rudradāman in second century Gujarat, "he who won wide fame by his theoretical and practical mastery and retention of the great knowledges, grammar and the rest" (*śabdārtha-*[. . .] *vidyānāṃ mahatīnāṃ pāraṇadhāraṇavijñānaprayogāvāptavipulakīrti-*), to Bhoja in tenth century Dhārā, "he who was wise in all aspects of literature" (*niḥśeṣavāṅmayavid*), Sañjaya in eighth century Java, "he who understood the finest points of the shastras" (*śāstrasūkṣmārthavedi-*), and Sūryavarman in eleventh century Angkor,

> He whose mind itself seemed truly a moving body, with the [*Great*] *Commentary* [of Patañjali] and the rest [of the grammatical treatises] for its feet, [the two kinds of] poetry for its hands, the six systems of philosophy for its senses, *dharmśāstra* for its head (*bhāṣyādicaraṇā kāvyapāṇiḥ ṣaḍdarśanendriyā/yanmatiḥ dharmaśāstrādimastakā jaṅgamāyate* [sic leg.]).

I have already called attention to how central is the literariness of Sanskrit public poetry, and I want to return to it briefly. Clearly Sanskrit was not used to give expression to what we might call politics as material power. The power embodied in the languages-of-state for purposes of taxation, for example, was always inclined to speak in the so-called vernacular idioms. Sanskrit was used to give expression to politics as aesthetic power. In public texts Sanskrit alone is permitted to be the language of the figure of sense (of simile, metaphor, and above all *śleṣa* or double-entendre); it alone is the language of the figure of sound (alliteration in all its varieties) and the language of metrics (the controlled deployment over time of recognizable patterns of phonemes). These functions

separate the object of Sanskrit discourse from the world of the everyday, not only for the obvious reason that the everyday world does not contain, except randomly, the figures of sense and sound and metric, but because the everyday world—of village boundaries, freehold conditions, tax exemptions, endowment requirements—is not the place for the activities with which these functions of language are associated: the interpretative, the ambiguous, the polysemic, the imaginative, the persuasive, the captivating. This is by no means to claim that Sanskrit inscriptional discourse does not at the same time make important arguments about reality: about genealogical authenticity and validation, relations of political dominance, royal virtue and royal rights. But as its very form shows, and shows increasingly by growing more complex and learned over time (the influence of Bāṇa and other *śleṣa* poets grows with almost equal intensity in the Deccan and Cambodia), this is not its only purpose: it also is concerned to enhance reality by poetry.

For these reasons we have to begin to realize that these epigraphs are important symbolic as well as discursive gestures. The Western scholars who edited the Cambodian inscriptions, for example—to whom we own an enormous debt of gratitude for their labours—like Indologists elsewhere working with such records, never cease to complain of what they saw as the sheer inanity of *praśasti* texts. "As impoverished of facts as they are rich in things devoid of interest", "interminable panegyric", says one scholar, and many before and after him have agreed. Without interest and interminable to whom? Someone in the Khmer country took care beyond imagining to compose the 218 complex punning verses (in the best tradition of Subandhu and Bāṇa) of Mebon (952 CE) or the 298 of Pre-Rup (961 CE)—indeed, if we are to believe one scholar, to compose it according to the dimensions of a stone surface that had already been selected! —engrave it and erect it in a visible spot in a grand temple complex. More than this, he took care to learn a Sanskrit that deploys all the rhetorical and formal resources of the most complex and sophisticated poetry from the subcontinent (not to mention virtually perfect orthography and grammar whose mastery shows no slackening to the very moment of the disappearance of Sanskrit culture from Cambodia). What else must we have before we begin to take these poems seriously as cultural statements of significance? And when will we begin to see that among the "facts" that are important in these texts is their textuality itself, their celebrating

royal (or other) power through the aesthetic potentialities of a language that projects such power beyond the confines of the local by linking up the local with a cosmopolitan culture of shared aesthetic presuppositions and moral-political commitments?

V

The discourse of public poetry in Sanskrit differs not only from the public discourse for which regional language could be used, but it also differs in some ways from non-public Sanskrit poetry. I want by way of a few examples to try to capture some of those differences and illustrate a few of the more general features of public Sanskrit poetry that I have been discussing. But I want to preface these examples by a few remarks about the poets themselves.

One of the striking facts about the poets who wrote public poetry is that only rarely do they seem to have been poets of courtly, salon, "private" poetry. We know the names of over three hundred poets who composed inscriptional verses. Of these, I can identify only a handful who are known, whether from extant manuscripts of their works, from being cited in anthologies or named elsewhere, or by their own declaration in an epigraph, to have written literary texts. Of these few only a handful are reasonably well known (Trivikramabhaṭṭa of Mānyakheta, tenth century; Cittapa of Dhārā, late tenth century; Umāpatidhara of Bengal, twelfth century; Śrīpāla of Gujarat, twelfth century; Jayamaṅgala Sūri, thirteenth century). Moreover, many authors of public poetry are clearly identified as men positioned *outside* the literary salon, whether as high officials (*sāndhivigrahika*, attested from the time of Hariṣeṇa, minister of Samudragupta in the fourth century, to that of one Kubera, minister of Netṛbhañjadeva in the fifteenth century; a *senāpati* composed a *praśasti* to Sūryavarman in 1002 CE), or indeed, members of the royal family (e.g., the princes Sūryakumāra and his brother Vīrakumāra, authors of twelfth-century *praśastis* on their father, Sūryavarman of Angkor) or less elevated clerks (*kāyastha*, such as a Sūryāditya who signs a public poem of 1128, or one Baijūka of Mathurā two hundred years later). Public and private poetry seem thus, by and large, to have been separate domains of cultural production that rarely intersected.

A second fact about this poetry is that, despite its vast profusion and its pervasion of the Indian cultural sphere—or more justly put,

its role in the creation of that sphere—the theoreticians of literature ignore it totally. It is never discussed in *sāhityaśāstra* analyses of literary art in general or genre in particular, with two very minor exceptions. (The commentator Namisādhu on Rudraṭa's *Kāvyālaṃkāra* is the sole authority to give a definition, but only a definition, of a principal genre of public poetry, the *praśasti* ["a *praśasti* is a eulogy wherein a king's family is described"] and Viśvanātha in his *Sāhityadarpaṇa* defines the *virudam* as "a praise poem for a king composed in verse and prose.") An unsympathetic reader (such as Ludwik Sternbach, who asserted that the "versifiers" lacked poetic inspiration and their verse is without literary interest) might of course argue that no one considered "public poetry" as *poetry*. Well, no one perhaps except the writers themselves. We find them claiming this status almost from the beginning of the Sanskrit millennium, with the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta (before 376 CE), whose author Hariṣeṇa calls his work a *kāvya;* and it continues, from the celebrated Tāḷagunda inscription of the Kadambas in the south (undated; *ca.* 455-470 CE),

> In deference to the command of King Śāntivarman
> Kubja has written this his own *kāvya*
> upon the face of this rock

to the recently published Bilpank epigraph of Śrīpāla in 1141:

> Śrīpāla, emperor of poets and adopted kin
> of King Siddharāja . . .
> composed this superb praise-poem *(praśasti).*

No doubt there were features of inscriptional poetry that accounted to some extent for its usual marginalization by literary elites, features that certainly were a function of the inscriptionality of the texts, if I may put it that way, and that may also, in some way or other, be related to the social location of their producers. But this is also something else at work, in the fabric of the texts themselves. Readers of Sanskrit poetry, as it is found in the great works of the courtly poets and dramatists, sense—and this is a feeling that reaches its fullest theoretical realization in the aesthetic philosophy

of the late tenth-century critic Abhinavagupta—that it presents a language world quite different from any other. What has to strike the reader of this poetry in the first instance is what I would call the attenuated historicity of Sanskrit literary experience, generated above all by the fact that it is not the language of everyday personal experience. It is not the language of childhood, the kitchen, the market, the army; of friendship or love; of memories or dreams. Nor, accordingly, is it the purpose of Sanskrit literature to deal with local habitations and names. It is rather to distill human experience into as generalizable and universalizable account as language can possibly produce. The transcendently beautiful poems of Amaru or Bhartṛhari, nameless and placeless as they are, are perfect expression of this tendency—one so well-known to readers and critics of Sanskrit that it has become something of a cliché.

The character of the public poetry of Sanskrit can be very different from this. It is here that the locally placed, the dated, the particular, the *referential* manifests itself in such abundance and, sometime, power. Pièces d'occasion they may by definition be, but the public poetry of Sanskrit tells us something precious about the fuller possibilities of what poetry could do and mean in early India, something that supplements the great canonical works and sets off in relief the latter's own literary purposes and procedures.

VI

Here is not the place to provide an anthology of inscriptional poetry; this is something I hope to do at some length elsewhere. But in closing let me offer just a very few examples of some of the things I have been trying to suggest. How rare it is to find elsewhere in Sanskrit literature the personal, deeply autobiographical sentiment such as we find constantly in the prose-poem epigraphs of the Bādāmi Cālukyas, as in the following copper-plate record of Vikramāditya II (742 CE):

> He became infused with divine energy the moment he was anointed into sovereignty over the entire world, and he resolved to destroy the Pallava, his natural enemy, who had stolen the luster of the former kings of his dynasty.
>
> Straightaway he reached Tuṇḍaka district, where he came face to face with the Pallava, Nandipotavarman. He defeated

him in battle and put him to flight and he got hold of precious things, those musical instruments, the *karumukha* and *samudraghoṣa*, the *khaṭvāṅga* standard, and elephants without peer, drunken, full-grown, celebrated elephants; a treasure of rubies whose rays could shatter the darkness; and a treasure of gold so great it took many men to carry. But he spared Kāñcī, that gorgeous belt of the lovely lady, the South, the place where the sage Agastya was once born in a sacred vessel.

He brought great happiness to brāhmaṇas, the wretched, the fatherless by his unstinting charity. He acquired great spiritual merit by returning vast treasures of gold to the stone temples built by Narasimhapota, like the Rājasiṃheśvara temple. With the shooting flame of his power he scorched many kings—the Paṇḍya, Cola, Kerala, Kalabhra and others. And he planted the victory pillar of his fame, brilliant as the autumn moon, at the southern ocean, where waves come boiling at the shore, and the shore shimmers with rays of mounds of pearls loosed from oysters when his dolphin-like elephants, shaken by their fear of the ocean, struck them and broke them open with their trunks . . . .

I have already mentioned the Tāḷagunda inscription of the time of Śāntivarman. It is carved on a 12-foot high granite pillar set before a temple in Shimoga District, Karnataka, and relates the story of the Kadamba kings, a brāhmaṇa clan of Karnataka, "the sons of Hāriti, who travelled the path of the triple ancient lore," and ultimately achieve kingship. The first of the clan is Mayūraśarman, whose story begins in his student days, and whose personality emerges from the epigraph with unusal boldness of delineation:

. . . So Mayūraśarman went down with his guru
Vīraśarman to the city of Pallava kings
eager to master sacred learning, and enrolled
as a student in the vedic school.

A heated agrument broke out over the horse sacrifice
of the Pallava king—Mayūraśarman was enraged.
"How miserable is life in this Kali age, with priests
become so much weaker than kings.

"It makes no difference how much you please your teachers,
or how hard you study your sacred texts—to become
a real brahmaṇa will still depend on the king.
What could be worse than that?'' And so

with a hand trained to handle holy *kuśa* grass,
kindling for the sacred fire, the mortar
and ladle, the ghee and oblation pot,
he drew out a flashing sword, ready to take on the world.

He proceeded to defeat in battle
the frontier guards of the Pallava kings,
and occupied the impassable wilderness
to the very gates of Śrīparvata, Mount of Royal Splendor.

The following verse, by a poet of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Indrarāja III writing on copper in the year 914 CE about an earlier king of the dynasty, locates this kind of historical referentiality in popular memory:

When the monsoon clouds gather and the downpour follows
and the arc of Indra's bow appears
old people tell of the time
Kṛṣṇarāja fought the Gurjaras,
how in a black rage he spanned his bow
studded with glittering jewels
and shot arrows upon the head of enemy heroes,
and how they howled.

Public poetry is not only the place where a new kind of royal historicity comes to expression. It is also the place for more modest gestures of remembrance and memorialization, such as are rare elsewhere in Sanskrit poetry. Here is a part of a fragmentary commemorative inscription from 510 CE. It is engraved on a pillar found implanted under the trees on the banks of the Bīma river in Eran (Sagar District, Madhya Pradesh); the pillar is crowned with the sculpted heads of the husband and wife referred to in the verses, which recount the battlefield death of the man, an official in the Gupta empire:

His son was glorious Goparāja,
a man famed for his bravery,
the nephew of Śarabharāja
and the < . . . > ornament of his dynasty.
When Bhānugupta, hero equal to Pārtha,
was emperor of the world,
they say that Goparāja came with him
to this place, in compliance with their pact.
He fought brilliantly in battle
and went to heaven like a celestial king.
In devotion and loyalty
his beloved wife ascended the pyre with him,
holding him tight.

An undated *praśasti* recording an endowment to the great Buddhist university of Nālandā in southern Bihar (twelfth century)—not the *praśasti* of a king but of a Buddhist cleric hailing from near Rajshahi in Bangladesh (Somapura = Paharpur)—show not only how far the inscriptional habit of public Sanskrit poetry spread beyond the royal centres themselves, but more important, how this poetry embodied deep-felt emotion—indeed, as we read it, the stone seems to speak with an almost palpable sadness:

In Somapura there lived an ascetic
named Karuṇāśrīmitra.

He cultivated the Buddhist virtues
by showing compassion to all living things
and bringing them happiness and welfare.

From Vaṅgāla came armies, they threw fire
in his dwelling, and it burst into flames.
Clutching the Buddha's lotus feet
the ascetic went to heaven.

The intensity of the impulse that prompted Sanskrit poets to cover the world in poetry, far beyond the service to any court, I find represented in the following little verse from perhaps the seventh century. It is incised on a boulder lying at the foot of the Merbabu volcano in central Java, near a spring (the "Tuk Mas" or "Golden

Spring") that gushes out from its steep and stony walls. The lines stand alone on the rock, doing what Sanskrit poetry can do so well, giving praise to what is beautiful:

Her younger sisters are the pure white lotuses,
she gushes from the rock face here
and from among the pebbles there, and there
pours out her cold clean water,
this spring that like the Gaṅgā makes all it touches pure.

In all these instances we find not just a discourse that by its unadorned directness gains forcefulness, sometimes pathos and even a kind of sublimity, but also a quality of localization that strives to fix in the stuff of language, somehow imagined to be as durable as the substance upon which it is incised, a fleeting and very real human moment. Both of these are qualities typically absent from other Sanskrit poetry, which has its own and very different resources to employ in achieving its extraordinary results.

A number of these features, I think, are present in the following two inscriptions of which I provide selections. The first is from the court of King Mānadeva of Nepal (464 CE), inscribed on a tall pillar before the Changu Narayan temple (10 kilometers northeast of Kathmandu). It begins with a genealogy of kings, starting with Vṛṣadeva, and Śaṅkaradeva, and then speaks of Dharmadeva, who "through righteousness alone protected the great kingdom of Nepāla":

His wife was the grand Śrī Rājyavatī.
She was the offspring of a pure family, a Lakṣmī
to his Viṣṇu with all her virtues. And he loved her
more than life itself.

< . . . > the king had shed the lustre of his fame
over this whole world, but then he left
for the realm of the gods—it was peaceful, like a trip
to a pleasure garden—but his wife suddenly collapsed,
wild with the fever of grief < . . . > utterly immobilized—
a woman who before separation from her husband
was ever busy with rites and rituals and the feeding of the gods.

Now this Queen Rājyavati—called the king's wife
but really his royal power incarnate—
was about to follow her husband,
her thoughts fixed on the other world.
She came to her son, Prince Mānadeva, a man
of faultless conduct, in beauty like the autumn moon
and like the moon a delight to all the people.
The words catching in her throat, drawing sighs
so slowly, her face stained with tears, she said,
with deep emotion, "Your father has gone to heaven.
O my son, there is no reason for me to live
now that your father has passed away. My dear son,
rule the kingdom, I will take the path
my husband took, before the day is out.

"How could I live without my husband, held back by the hope—
which long years of mutual pleasure still arouse—
of being reunited with him, when that could never be
more than a dream or mirage? I am going," she said
with determination. But then her broken-hearted son
touched his head to her feet in devotion and firmly spoke.

"What use would I have for pleasures, what possible joy
in living if I were parted from you?
First I will give up my life—and only then
can you go from this world to heaven." These words of his,
moistened with tears from his lotus eyes, were the cords
of a net that trapped her like a bird. And trapped she stayed . . .

The second is one of the few inscriptional works in India to gain some renown outside the narrow circles of epigraphists and historians. It is carved on a slab of sandstone that had been set in the wall of a staircase leading up to a temple in the small village of Mandasor in Madhya Pradesh; now it is on display in the Gurī Mahal Museum, Gwalior. The poem tells the story of the migration of a group of silk-weavers from Lāṭa in southern Gujarat to their new home in Mandasor, in the year 436 CE.

. . . In the land of Lāṭa, the trees bend
under the weight of their flowers,

there are beautiful temples, royal halls, holy monasteries.
But the world-famous craftsmen of Lāṭa
left that land of theirs and its wooded mountains,

attracted by the good king of this region.
Despite the hardships of the journey,
they came with great hopes to Daśapura—at first
only in their daydreams, and then with children and kin . . . .

They formed close associations
with their neighbors; day by day friendship grew.
The kings treated them like their own sons,
and they lived happily in Daśapura.
....
A girl can be very young and pretty,
gold at her neck, flowers in her hair and betel
in her mouth—yet the real beauty only comes
when she puts on her pair of silks.

And who makes the silk that adorns
the land far and wide—soft silk,
with a riot of colors, a true delight to see?
These craftsmen from Lāṭa.

Yet knowing that the life of man, and wealth,
however vast, are far more fragile
than a petal blown from the ear of a forest spirit,
they made a firm and good decision,

while King Kumāragupta was ruling the earth,
....

and Bandhuvarman was the lord
protecting the rich town of Daśapura:

With the wealth acquired from their craft
the guild of silk-weavers would have a temple built'
a noble temple like no other, in honour of the blazing sun.
....

In the year four hundred ninety three
from the founding of the Mālava tribe,
during the time of year
when clouds begin to rumble

in the month of Sahasya, in the white fortnight,
the lucky thirteenth day, this place was opened, with hymns of praise.

As long as Lord Śiva bears his high pile
of matted yellow hair and pure crescent moon within;
as long as the bright lotus garland hangs
at Viṣṇu's shoulder, this noble house will last.

By order of the guild and with true devotion
this house of the sun was built;
and with great care the above was composed
by Vatsabhāṭṭi.

Foolishly criticized by past scholars as trite, the work of a poetaster, the Mandasor epigraph offers us a rare and memorable chance to hear another voice speak, one usually silenced in Sanskrit literature, and speak with an honest pride and piety we can still admire 1500 years later. And like the other epigraphs I have noticed—a minute selection of the hundreds of thousands available, of which perhaps less than two-thirds have yet been published—this gives eloquent testimony to how Sanskrit poets, participants in one of history's most extraordinary cosmopolitan cultures, made the world alive with poetry.

Reference

1. The first four sections of this paper are a much abbreviated version, omitting the full presentation of evidence and bibliographical references, of a work in progress, entitled "The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, AD 300-1300: Transculturation, Vernacularization, and the Question of Ideology", that will appear in a volume on the *Ideology and Status of Sanskrit*, ed., J.E.M. Houben (Leiden, forthcoming).

9

The Major Dramatists

Rajendra Mishra

Bhāsa, Kālidāsa, Śūdraka, Harṣavardhana, Bhavabhūti, Viśākhadatta, Bhatta Nārāyaṇa, Murāri, Rājaśekhara and Jayadeva are the major dramatists in Sanskrit literature, flourishing in the range of the 4th century B.C. to the 13th century A.D.

Bhāsa

A great debate regarding Bhāsa's identity, authenticity and authorship has been creating ideological fluctuation in the minds of Sanskrit pandits. For a long period the dramatic works of Bhāsa were unavailable. But his authorship and historicity were always beyond any doubt.

Kālidāsa (1st century BC) referred to Bhāsa in the prologue of his first drama *Mālavikāgnimitram.*

Bāṇabhaṭṭa, the court-poet of Harṣavardhana (606-648 AD) praised the dramaturgic excellence and social prestige of Bhāsa in his *Harṣacharitam.*

Rājasékhara, the court-poet of the great Gurjara-Pratihāra king of Kānyakubja, Mahendrapāla (10th century AD) describes the popularity of *Bhāsanāṭakachakram.*

Some great rhetoricians also refer to the authorship of Bhāsa. The first and foremost among them is Acharya Bhāmaha, who discusses the theme of the *Pratijñānātikā* of Bhāsa.

In later periods, Bhāsa has been recalled by Vākpatirāja and Jayadeva through their panegyric expressions. It was M.M.T. Ganapati Shāstri, the scholar curator of the Madras M.S. Library, who published thirteen dramas of Bhāsa under the Ananta Shayana Series in 1912. This publication generated a stormy debate on Bhāsa's historicity and his authorship. But the evidence presented by Bāṇabhaṭṭa, *Sūtradhārakṛtārambhaiḥ*, is alone sufficient to prove the authorship of these plays, since all of them commence with the direct entry of the Sūtradhāra (नान्द्यन्ते ततः प्रविशति सूत्रधारः).

We can easily divide Bhāsa's plays in three categories on the basis of their themes:

A. Plays Based on the Rāmāyaṇa:
 1. *Pratimānāṭaka* and 2. *Abhiṣekanāṭaka*
B. Plays Based on the Mahābhārata:
 3. *Pañcharātra* 4. *Madhyama Vyāyoga*
 4. *Dūtavākya* 6. *Dūta Ghaṭotkacha*
 7. *Karṇabhāra* 8. *Bālacharita* and 9. *Ūrubhaṅga*
C. Plays Based on Folktales & Udayana Stories
 10. *Daridrachārudatta* 11. *Avimāraka*
 12. *Pratijñā Yaugandharāyaṇa* and 13. *Svapnavāsavadattam.*

Bhāsa's greatest contribution is to reproduce the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata in the easiest dramatic form. He achieved success in popularizing the episodes of the two great Indian epics which were confined to scholastic society. But the poet does not present the stories in their original form. On the other hand, he has profusely altered the incidents, dialogues and sequences in his presentation for the sake of dramatic pleasure and mass interest.

Bhāsa's imagination is significant. The concept of Devakula (the temple) in *Pratimā* and the concept of Svapna (the dream) in *Svapnavāsavadattam* are unique. These have provided guidelines for subsequent great dramatists like Kālidāsa and Viśākhadatta also. Due to these dramatic devices Bhāsa stands unparalleled in the treatment of dualistic love. This love is not merely a physical hunger for sensual pleasure. It is an overflowing sensual satisfaction which washes away all physical aspects. Udayana, the hero of the *Svapnavāsavadattam* feels the ecstasy of that love which ends in an

indescribable contentment and eternal peace and not in sensual lust.

Bhāsa's treatment of nature and his literary presentation is somewhat indebted to the *Rāmāyaṇa*. He often repeats the expressions of Vālmiki. The pathetic condition of an unprotected lawless society,[1] depicted by Bhāsa reminds us of Ayodhyā being deprived of the great king Daśaratha.

गोपहीना यथा गावो विलयं यान्त्यपालिता:।
एवं नृपतिहीना हि विलयं यान्ति वै प्रजा:।।

—*Pratimā*. 3.24.

Although not superlative in literary grandeur, the similes of Bhāsa are free from any kind of artificiality, classicism and other rhetorical devices. On the whole they are full of spontaneity and naturalness. For example:

सूर्य इव गतो राम: सूर्यदिवस इव लक्ष्मणोऽनुगत:।
सूर्यदिवसाऽवसाने छायेव न दृश्यते सीता।।

—*Pratimā*. 2.7.

'Rāma vanished like the sun. Lakshmaṇa also followed him as the daylight follows the sun. Alas! Sitā has also become invisible like the shadow in the absence of the sun and the day.'

Likewise is Bhāsa's treatment of nature. Kālidāsa's treatment of nature is totally subjective, reflecting the inner feelings of his characters. But nature (*Prakṛti*) has nothing to do with the innate sensibility of any character. It focuses exclusively upon the everchanging curtains of the cosmic drama—multicoloured clouds, flying birds, the rising sun or moon, dense smoke piercing the roof of the hermitage and so on. In this natural depiction simplicity and reality seem to predominate. I would like to justify my statement by quoting a single textual testimony.

खगा वासोपेता: सलिलमवगाढो मुनिजन:
प्रदीप्तोऽग्निर्भाति प्रविचरति धूमो मुनिवनम्।
परिभ्रष्टो दूराद् रविरपि च संक्षिप्तकिरणो।
रथं व्यावर्त्यासौ प्रविशति शनैरस्तशिखरम्।।

Kālidāsa

Although a great literary confrontation has been going on among Sanskrit scholars regarding his life-history, we have some very important and indispensable evidence for placing him in the 1st century BC.

Actually it is the co-ordinating genius of Kālidāsa which makes him superb and extraordinary. In his dramatic works he has ably combined the divine and the mortal (heaven and earth), the urban and the rural cultures. He has presented the whole creation as a combined family, in which not only human beings but Apsaras, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Rākshasas and Devas also live as a counterpart. They help each other in their miseries and relish the delight of life in the moments of victory and prosperity. This cultural co-ordination, seems to be the back-bone of Kālidāsan literature as a whole.

When Shakuntalā departs from the hermitage of her god-father Maharṣi Kaṇva, the Vanadevatās (the forest deities) shower good wishes on her:

रम्यान्तर: कमलिनीहरितै:सरोभि
श्छायाद्रुमैर्नियमितार्कमयूखताप: ।
भूयात्कुशेशयरजोमृदुरेणुरस्या:
शान्ताऽनुकूलपवनश्च शिवश्च पन्था: ।।

—Act 4.10

Such are the countless verses in Kālidāsan poetry, where this type of co-ordination can be perceived. Kumbhodara (a lion) is appointed for keeping safe the devadāru trees, planted and watered by Parvati. Sānumatī (a nymph) carries away Shakuntala from the court of Duṣyanta. Duṣyanta goes to swarga in order to help Indra, the ruler of paradise. Nandini (the divine cow) obliges the great king Dilīpa by giving a son (Raghu) to him. Kusha, the son fo Rāma marries a Nāgakanya (a serpent's daughter). Purūravā, the king of the lunar-dynasty, marries Urvashi, who is an Apsaras.

These references show, the art of co-ordination and combination handled by Kālidāsa. In short, he deals with the whole universe in his themes.

Now we come to the second point and that is his treatment of nature. For Kālidāsa nature has been a conscious counterpart of

sensate society. He makes no difference between the two. Senselessness has never been the distinctive feature of nature in Kālidašan poetry. What the great English poet Wordsworth did in the 18th century, Kālidāsa did more successfully in the 1st century BC. The flora and the fauna seems to be the companion of human beings in their happiness and sorrow. This has been a unique feature of Kālidāsa's poetry.

The treatment of nature in Kālidāsan poetry has some suggestion, some motivation, some future indication. Shakuntalā, on her way to Hastināpura beholds a couple of Chakravāka bird. They are separated by the thick leaves of the lotus plant. The Chakravākī, unable to see her companion, restlessly quivers for a while. Shakuntalā, comparing herself with that Chakravākī plunges into deep sorrow, capturing a note of future separation from her husband, the Hastināpura ruler Duṣyanta. But Anasūya consoles her saying: "Look here my darling, the assistance of hope, makes a man endure the greatest sorrow of separation." To quote the original context:

एषाऽपि प्रियेण विना गमयति रजनी विषाददीर्घतराम्।
गुर्वपि विरहदु:खम् आशाबन्ध: साहयति।।

—Act 4.15

Another distinctive feature of Kālidāsa's poetry is his limitless love for his country. The great mountain Himālaya is not merely an object of nature. For Kālidāsa, Himālaya is a divine being, a *Devatātmā*.[2] The meeting point of the three sacred river-streams (Gangā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī) has been the only source of salvation to Kālidāsa.[3] It may be the travel-track of the cloud-messenger (Meghadūta) or the world-victory-expedition of Emperor Raghu or the Swayamvara (self-selection) of Indumatī—Kālidāsa takes advantage of the situation and expresses his heart-felt and deep love for Bhārata, alongwith its rivers, mountains, provinces and seasons. From that point of view he seems to be the first National Poet known in the history of our nation.

It seems rather hard to fathom the depth of the poetry of Kālidāsa. He never means only that which the words, used in his poems, acutally say. His poetry is not confined to a conventional meaning. Truly speaking, he is beyond tradition, beyond the beaten track and beyond any man-made formality. The greatest

commentator of his era, M. M. Mallinatha Suri, also finds himself unable to explain the hidden meaning of Kalidasa's poetry:

कालिदासगिरां सारं कालिदास: सरस्वती।
चतुर्मुखोऽथवा ब्रह्माविदुर्नान्ये तु मादृशा:।।

Śūdraka

The historicity of Śūdraka is still doubtful. But most of the critics have fixed his date, somewhere between Kālidāsa (1st century BC) and Daṇḍin (7th century AD). Kālidāsa, while quoting the names of his predecessor dramatists like Bhāsa, Saumilla and Kaviputra omits Śūdraka's name. This is the most reliable evidence for accepting that Śūdraka was not prior to Kālidāsa. On the other hand Achārya Daṇḍin, in his *Kāvyādarśa,* quotes a verse from the *Mṛcchakaṭikam* of Śūdraka:

लिम्पतीव तमोऽङ्गानि वर्षतीवाञ्जनं नभ:।
असत्पुरुषसेवेव दृष्टिर्विफलतां गता।। 1.34

Apart from this conclusive standpoint, some more significant opinions are presented here:

1. Achārya Vāmana in his *Kāvyalankāra Sūtravṛtti* mentions the work of Sūdraka,[4] which proves his precedence. Vāmana flourished under the patronage of the Kashmir ruler Jayāpida (779-813 AD) as mentioned by Kalhaṇa in his *Rājataranginī.*[5]

2. Pandit Baladeva Upādhyāya presents an excellent standpoint. In the 9th act of the *Mṛcchakaṭikam*, the planet Jupiter (बृहस्पति) has been stated as the rival of Mars (मंगल).[6] But the great astrologer Varāhamihira has accepted them as fast friends in his *Bṛhajjātaka*[7]. This clearly proves that Śūdraka might have flourished before Varāhamihira (died 580 A.D.)

Mṛcchakaṭikam, which means an earthen-cart, is a drama of the *Prakaraṇa* genre. It is divided into ten acts. It is considered to be the first social drama is the history of Sanskrit dramatic literature.

The hero, Chārudatta, who is a Brāhmaṇa by caste is a great lover of music. Previously he was a great Sārthavāha (merchant) but now unfortunately has become penniless. But his great merits like truthfulness, benevolence, gentleness, munificence and kindness

are still with him and he still maintains his social prestige in the city of Ujjayini. His wife Dhūtā is of a submissive nature. She is chaste and virtuous and never complains.

The beautiful, chaste and affectionate danseuse Vasantasenā loves Chārudatta deeply and hates Shakāra (Sansthānaka) who pursues her in order to satisfy his lust. But she keeps herself away from the grip of Shakāra who happens to be the brother-in-law of the valourless ruler Pālaka.

The two never falter but stand still like a banyan tree in storms. Chārudatta never regrets his poverty. But he is shocked to see that the friends, who often attended his home, have been slinking away, because of his pennilessness.

सत्यं न मे विभवनाशकृतास्ति चिन्ता
भाग्यक्रमेण हि धनानि भवन्ति यान्ति।
एतत्तु मां दहति नष्टधनाश्रयस्य
यत्सौहृदादपि जनाः शिथिलीभवन्ति।।

—Act 1.13

Mṛcchakaṭikam seems to be a reflecting mirror of its contemporary society. Deviation from prescribed rules of morality, police atrocities, gambling, thievery, prostitution, litigation, biased verdicts and many other social distortions can be seen in this distinctive dramatic work of Śūdraka. The high character of Chārudatta really enchants the reader's mind. He is the noblest of human beings who helps himself in his helplessness. He has been entrapped in the murder case of Vasantasenā. The hangmen make fun and utters satirical remarks about him. The judges also accuse him.

In his own defence, Chārudatta submits only this much: 'I have never plucked even a flower from the branch of a creeper (out of compassion). How can I throttle a lady, pulling her hair as dark as the wings of the large black bee?

योऽहंलतां कुसुमितामपि पुष्पहेतो
राकृष्य नैव कुसुमावचयं करोमि।
सोऽहं कथं भ्रमरपक्षरुचौ सुदीर्घे
केशे प्रगृह्य रुदतीं प्रमदां निहन्मि।।

—Act 9.28

Viśākhadatta

A short introduction of Viśākhadatta is available in the prologue of his drama *Mudrārākshasam*. According to it the poet's grandfather, Vaṭeśhvaradatta, was a ruler. His father Bhāskaradatta also earned the title of Mahārāja. The poet was fully adept in the Arthashāstra treatise on polity, philosophy, astrology and logic. He was a staunch follower of the Vedic religion.

Although the only extant dramatic work of Viśākhadatta is *Mudrārākshasam;* literary evidence indicates some other works also. A brief account of these works is given below:

1. *Devīchandraguptam*—Based on the historical account of Chandragupta, the son of Samudragupta and Devī Dhruvaswaminī. The popularity of the theme is evident through its mention in the *Harṣacharitam* of Bāṇabhaṭṭa and *Kāvyamimāmsā* of Rājaśekhara.

2. *Abhisārikāvanchitakam:* The *Abhinavabhārati* of Achārya Abhinavagupta and the *Śṛngāraprakāśa* of king Bhojadeva mention this dramatic work, which was based on the life-history of Vatsaraja Udayana of Kaushāmbi.

Thus, all the three dramatic works of Viśākhadatta are related to history. This shows the intrinsic interest and partiality of the playwright towards historical and traditional themes.

Viśākhadatta's stagecraft achieved its acme in his monumental play *Mudrārākshasam* based on the story of Chāṇakya and Chandragupta, the first sovereign ruler of the Mauryan dynasty. The drama, having been divided into seven acts of full length, delineates the political dexterity and diplomacy of Mahāprājña Chāṇakya, the political teacher, guardian and mentor of Chandragupta. It was only he, who could smash the mighty kingdom of the Nandas into pieces and establish the Mauryan empire. For strengthening its political rule he wanted to get hold of Rākshasa, the faithful premier of the Nandas. It was really an impossible task. But the great diplomat Chāṇakya makes it possible through his political expertise. He writes a forged letter, with the help of Shakaṭadāsa, who happens to be the fast friend of Rākshasa. Chāṇakya gets this letter duly stamped with the signature of Rākshasa. This 'mudra' or the stamped letter proves to be the most forceful device in achieving victory. Chāṇakya succeeds in grabbing Rākshasa, through this stamped letter. That is why, the drama has been entitled *Mudrārākshasam.*

Mudārākshasam is a marvellous play from the dramatic point of

view. The dialogues are tremendously meaningful and the treatment of the rasas (sentiments) is superb. Chāṇakya, Chandragupta, Rākshasa and Malayaketu are the four mighty pillars of this drama. These characters, along with their peculiar individuality, seem to be alive and full of vitality. The playwright has achieved much success in popularizing even a difficult and complicated subject like politics.

The absence of even a single female character makes this play distinctive. Another peculiarity lies in the absence of Vidūshaka or the traditional jester. The dramatic theme itself is so convoluted and tricky and full of curiosity that the spectators never feel impatience. Every moment they remain alert, excited and eager to see the climax of the drama.

Harṣavardhana

Harṣavardhana, the ruler of Kānyakubja belonged to the Vardhana dynasty of Sthāṇvishvara (modern Thānesar city near Kurukshetra, Haryana). He was the second son of Prabhākara Vardhana, the conqueror of the Hūṇas and Yashomati. Prince Rājyavardhana was his elder brother. His only sister Princess Rājashree was married to Grahavarmā, the Kānyakubja ruler of the Maukhari dynasty. The prosperous kingdom of Harṣavardhana lasted from 606 to 648 AD. An authentic, but incomplete account of Harṣadeva is available in the famous *akhyāyika, Harṣacharitam,* of the great poet Bāṇabhaṭṭa.

Harṣavardhana, a great lover of the fine arts and an adept in Buddhist canonical literature, was a great devotee of the Goddess Saraswatī. Not only Bāṇabhaṭṭa but some other highly reputed poets also adorned the literary assembly of Harṣhadeva. Mayūrabhatta (the creator of *Sūryashataka*) and Mātanga Diwākara were among them. It is heard that Mātanga Diwākara was a Chāṇḍāla by caste. Even then he earned a reputation equal to Bāṇa and Mayūra because of his poetic talent. This is evident from the expression of *Rājaśhekhara*, given below:

अहो प्रभावो वाग्देव्या यन्मातङ्गदिवाकरः।
श्रीहर्षस्याभवत्सभ्यः समो बाणमयूरयोः।।

Harṣavardhana, revived the tradition of the high academic taste of predecessor kings like Vikramāditya, Śūdraka, Rudradāman,

Sātavāhana Hāla and others. He could influence the mind of later poets and critics like Padmagupta (in his *Navasāhasānkacharitam*) Soddhala (in his *Udayasundarikathā*) and Dāmodaragupta (in his *Kuṭṭanimatam*). The Chinese traveller Itsing, who visited India after the demise of Harṣadeva, recalls his literary services in his travel-accounts. He tells that the king Shilāditya (Harṣadeva) had got staged the story of Bodhisattva Jimūtavāhana, with actors, along with musical instruments. His court-poet Bāṇabhaṭṭa also praises his poetic talent, saying:

> राज्ञां सम्भाषणेषु परित्यक्तमपि मधु वर्षन्तं, काव्यकथास्वपीतममृतमुद्वमन्तमिति।.........अस्य कवित्विस्य वाचो न पर्याप्तो विषय: etc.
>
> — *Harsacharitam.*

Harṣavardhana wrote three plays—*Priyadarśikā, Ratnāvalī* and *Nāgānanda*. The first two plays are based on the Udayana episode and the last one on a tragic Jātaka story (of Vidyādhara Jimūtavāhana).

Harṣa's dramatic art is excellent. He seems to be adept in various Shāstras. The erotic scenes show his expertise in the science of sex. Most rhetoricians have quoted verses from *Ratnāvalī*, a masterpiece dramatic work. Dramaturgical rules and regulations have been strictly applied by Harṣadeva in his plays. He knows well, how a lovelorn heart beats! In short, romanticism prevails everywhere in his comic plays, *Priyadarśikā* and *Ratnāvali*. For example:

> किं पद्मस्य रुचिं न हन्ति नयनानन्दं विधत्ते न किं
> वृद्धिं वा झषकेतनस्य कुरुते नालोकमात्रेण किम् ?
> वक्त्रेन्दौ तव सत्ययं यदपर: शीतांशुरुज्जृम्भते
> दर्प: स्यादमृतेन चेदिह तवाऽप्यस्त्येव बिम्बाधरे।।

"Patience has become helpless. Where should go benevolence? Charity has vanished. Compassion seems to be dead. Oh my son! The whole world has become void, being deprived of you." This lamentation of Jimūtavāhana's father, makes the reader tearful. Just see the situation:

निराधारं धैर्यं कमिव शरणं यातुविनय:
क्षम: क्षान्तिं वोढुं क इह, विरता दानपरता।
हतं नूनं सत्यं व्रजतु कृपणाक्वाद्य करुणा
जगज्जातं शून्यं त्वयि तनय लोकान्तरगते!!

Bhattanārāyaṇa

Bhattanārāyaṇa originally belonged to Kānyakubja territory but he migrated to Gaudadesha or Bengal on the invitation of Adishūra, the ruler of that region in the 8th century AD. Adishūra was the ruler preceding the Pāla kings.

The only dramatic work of Bhāttanārāyaṇa is *Veṇīsamhāra*, based on the Mahābhārata episode. It is divided in six acts. The dramatic theme starts with the peace talks of Lord Krishna, initiated by the Pāṇḍava brothers. Bhima becomes angry and does not like this proposal. Ultimately, the proposal for reconciliation fails due to the intransigence of Duryodhana, who wants to arrest Lord Krishna. Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest Pāṇḍava, gets incensed by the disgrace of his well-wisher and consequently the war breaks out.

The critics adept in stagecraft and dramaturgy have accepted this play as an ideal drama. Although Yudhiṣṭhira is the hero of the play on technical grounds, the characterization of Bhīmasena excells him everywhere.

The stormy dialogues between Ashvathāmā and Karṇa, also hold the spectators spellbound. Ashvathāmā, being enraged by the killing of his revered father, challenges the Pāndava warriors, in burning words.

The language used by Bhattanārāyaṇa is very forceful and standardized. The plentiful use of compounds makes it befitting the war-theme. The main sentiment in the play is *Vīra* and the supporting sentiments are *Raudra* and *Śṛngāra.*

Bhavabhūti

Bhavabhūti, who flourished under the patronage of the great 8th century ruler Yashovarmā, was born in Padmapura, situated somewhere in Vidarbha. He was a Kāshyapa-gotrī Brāhmaṇa and belonged to the Taittirīya branch of the Black Yajurveda. Neelakaṇtha, Jatukarṇī and Bhatta Gopāla were his father, mother and grandfather respectively. The name of his teacher was Jnānanidhi. In the prologue of his *Mahāvīracharitam*, Bhavabhūti

introduces himself as श्रीकण्ठपदलाञ्छनो भवभूतिर्नाम. According to some commentators Shrikaṇṭha was the real name of the poet. Afterwards he became famous as Bhavabhūti on the basis of the most literary, allegorical and fascinating use of this particular word:

साम्बापुनातु भवभूतिपवित्रमूर्तिः

Bhavabhūti's authorship of three plays is beyond any doubt and debate. These are: *Mālatimādhavam, Mahāviracharitam* and *Uttararāmacharitam.*

Mālatimādhavam is a *Prakaraṇa* in ten acts, composed in the tradition of Ashvaghoṣa (*Sāriputra Prakaraṇam*) and Śūdraka (*Mṛcchakatikam*). But is has several differences also.

Mahāviracharitam consists of six acts. It seems to be a dramatic renovation of the primitive Rāma episode. The poet has tried his best to build up a new glamorous character of the hero and has achieved success. He is an ideal personage. His character is moderate, righteous, heroic and protective. He kills the monkey commander Bāli, who came to fight with him on Rāvaṇa's initiative. Whatever seems improper, objectionable and adverse in Rāma, is only due to Rāvaṇa's evil character.

Uttararāmcharitam delineates the latter half of the Rāmāyaṇa. It is divided in seven acts. The play begins with the return of the victorious Rāma to Ayodhyā and ends with the reunion of Rāma and Sitā in the hermitage of Vālmiki. Between these two poles of the theme emerge a series of occurrences, based on the poetic talent of Bhavabhūti.

The central theme of this splendid play is the banishment of Sitā by Rāma, the ruler of Ayodhyā in order to satisfy the common public. He sacrifices his personal pleasure and banishes his faultless wife, for the satisfaction of his subjects:

स्नेहं दयां च सौख्यं च यदि वा जानकीमपि।
आराधनाय लोकस्य मुञ्चतो नास्ति में व्यथा।। 1.12.

'For the satisfaction of the common people I may be deprived of love, compassion, happiness, even Sita, and I will not be dejected.'

Sitā dwells in the forest of Daṇḍaka, where she lived earlier with

her husband Rāma. Rāma returns back to Daṇḍakāraṇya again after several years and beholds his deserted hermitage. He recalls the happy days, enjoyed with his sweet-heart wife Sitā. The tempestuous reminiscences make him remorseful and he weeps bitterly for his beloved wife, cursing and accusing the public which stood responsible for this henious crime.

'इदमशरणैरद्यास्माभि: प्रसीदत रुद्यते।'

His heart shatters. He feels burnt inwardly. His sensibility plunges into blind darkness and he becomes totally dejected and listless.

हा हा देवि! स्फुटति हृदयं स्रंसते देहबन्ध:
शून्यं मन्ये जगदविरलज्वालमन्तर्ज्वलामि।
सीदन्नन्धे तमसि विधुरो मज्जतीवान्तरात्मा
विष्यङ्मोह: स्थगयति कथं मन्दभाग्य: करोमि!!

Uttara 3.38.

Bhavabhūti proves to be an expert playwright in characterization. Divinity permeates his poetry. Although he has attempted almost all the sentiments in his plays, his treatment of pathos (*Karuṇa*) is superb and unparalleled. Even the stones weep and the heart of the thunderbolt breaks into pieces:

अपि ग्रावा रोदित्यपि दलति वज्रस्य हृदयम्!!

Bhavabhūti is par excellence the poet of compassion and pathos. In his opinion, all other sentiments are only transformations of the single *Karuṇa* rasa. In the ocean, we behold ripples, bubbles and whirlpools separately. But do they have a separate existence? No, they are only manifestations of the sea. In other words, they all merge in the entity of the ocean. In the words of Bhavabhūti:

एको रस: करुण एव निमित्तभेदा-
द्भिन्न: पृथक्पृथगिवाश्रयते विवर्तान्।
आवर्तबुद्बुदतरङ्गमयान्विकारा-
नम्भो यथा सलिलमेव हि तत्समग्रम्।।

Uttara. 3.47.

Bhavabhūti has usually chosen nature's elemental scenes. He is a habitual of witnessing only the pristine form of nature where the birds are warbling in ardent passion, hilly rivulets are flowing swiftly, and being echoed by the falling ripe fruit of blackberries. Unlike Kālidāsa, he could never see the humanized form of nature. Describing Daṇḍakāraṇya the poet says:

इह समदशकुन्ताक्रान्त क्रान्तवानीरवीरुत्
प्रसवसुरभिशीतस्वच्छतोया वहन्ति।
फलभरपरिणामश्यामजम्बूनिकुञ्ज-
स्खलनमुखरभूरिस्रोतसो निर्झरिण्य:।।

Uttara. 2.10.

The critics of the later period have praised several elements of Bhavabhūti's poetry. His treatment of innate human feelings and enchanting usage of the *Shikhariṇī* metre are two of them.

Kshemendra (12th century AD) in his *Suvṛttatilaka* writes that the *Shikhariṇī* of Bhavabhūti seems to be a river, flowing pauselessly. It dances like a peacock in the dense forest.

भवभूते: शिखरिणी निरर्गलतरंगिणी।
चकिता घनसन्दर्भे या मयूरीव नृत्यति।।

Most expressions of human feelings are common in all the dramatic works of Bhavabhūti. A good number of such verses occur in *Uttararāmacharita* and *Malatimādhava* in a similar way.

Dramatists of the Later Period

The excellence of the dramatic art and the grandeur of stagecraft were not the same after Bhavabhūti. But the spontaneous flow of

dramatic creativity never stopped. Māyurāja (Anangaharṣa) Murāri[8], Rājaśekhara, Shaktibhadra, Mahādeva, Jayadeva, Kulasekhara Varmā, Rāmachandra Sūri, Vāmanabhatta Bāṇa and Rāma Varma nourished the drying sprout of Sanskrit drama in later centuries.

Rājaśekhara, undoubtedly the greatest poet, dramatist, rhetorician and political mentor of the Gurjara-Pratihāra dynasty, deserves a special mention among Sanskrit dramatists. He was a great supporter of the local-dialects or Prākṛtas and composed one of his plays entirely in Prākṛta. That is his *Karpūramanjarī saṭṭaka*. He belonged to a rich family tradition, which had been adorned by great poets like Akāla-Jadada (the grandfather of the poet) Kādarbani Rāma, Surānanda, Tarala and Kavirāya. His wife, Avantisundari also had much poetic talent and helped him in establishing his rhetorical theories. She has been occasionally quoted by Rājaśekhara in his *Kāvyamimāmsā*.

Rājaśekhara, originally belongs to Mahāraṣtra but he flourished under the patronage of the great Pratihāra king Mahendrapāla. Being a contemporary of Mahendrapāla, Mahipāla and Yuvaryadeva of Tripuri, Rājaśekhara may be dated between 880 to 920 AD. He wrote the following plays:

1. *Bālarāmāyaṇam*, in 10 acts.
2. *Bālabhāratam* or *Prachaṇḍapāṇḍavam*, of which only 2 acts are extant,
3. *Karpūramanjari* (Nātikā)
4. *Viddhashālabhanjikā* (Nātikā)

Rājaśekhara has exhibited his poetic talent, imaginative splendour and linguistic beauty in his *Bālarāmāyaṇa*. Several alterations in the basic Rāma episode have been undertaken by the poet. The dialogues are witty and enjoyable.[9]

Jayadeva, the most brilliant among the playwrights of the later period, flourished in the 13th century AD. His dramatic work *Prasannarāghavam* seems to have been an epoch-making literary creation, which could attract the common public towards the Rāma-episode. The Hindi poet Goswāmi Tulasīdāsa is partially indebted to Jayadeva, in several descriptions. In his *Rāmacharitamānasa* he has directly borrowed the garden-scene from the *Prasannarāghavam*. The proud dialogues between Parashurāma and prince Lakshmaṇa have also motivated Goswamiji to incorporate this thrilling context in his work.

This is only a brief account of the major dramatists in Sanskrit literature. The stream of creativity is still in progress. Modern Sanskrit literature (beginning from 1784 AD) is rich in dramatic creation and stage-performances.

References

1. Cf नाराजके जनपदे etc. *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* 2.65.15.
2. See: अस्युत्तरस्यां दिशि देवतात्मा etc. *Kumar.* 1.1
3. See: *Raghuvansham.* 13.58.
4. शूद्रकादिरचितेषु प्रबन्धेषु etc.
5. *Rājatarangini* 4.497.
6. अंगारकविरुद्धस्य प्रक्षीणस्य बृहस्पतेः।
ग्रहोऽयमपरः पार्श्वे धूमकेतुरिवोत्थितः।। मृच्छ 9.33.
7. जीवेन्दूष्णकटा कुजस्य सुहृदः। वृह 2.16
8. मुरारिपदचिन्तायां भवभूतेस्तु का कथा।।
भवभूतिं परित्यज्य मुरारिमुररीकुरु।।
अंके कुनाटक इवोत्तमनायकस्य
नाशं कविर्व्यधित यस्य मुरारिरित्थम्।। हर 68.68.
9. भो लंकेश्वर दीयतां जनकजा etc.

10

The Development of Aesthetics and Literary Criticism in India

Anthony K. Warder

Why study Indian aesthetics and criticism? In the first place they are fascinating subjects. But there is broader social or political interest, for the austere who despise indulgence. These studies are not 'English' or Western. Nor are they 'eastern'. They are specifically Indian, in the cultural, not the present political, sense. They are a symbol of independent thinking in India. This might seem self-evident, but again and again one sees that the resumption of political independence in India has, in the main, not been followed by the resumption of cultural independence.[1] The widespread use of the old imperial language, in place of Sanskrit, as a 'link' (chain?) between the various parts of India has embedded Anglocentrism and Eurocentric thinking in the minds of those groomed in the 'modern' (Victorian) educational system, those trained to run the present bureaucracy and economy as well as to perpetuate this alienising education. Perhaps a journal of the Council for Cultural Relations is not the place to write against relations, to insist on the unrelatedness, the Indianness, of this topic. But this is the only way to show its importance: it is different, it is not a useless duplication. Indian aesthetics yields powerful insights into art and into (universal) human nature.

The earliest substantial texts on aesthetics extant in India are

Tolkāppiyaṉār's *Tolkāppiyam* in Tamil[2] and the *Nāṭyaśāstra*[3] in Sanskrit attributed to the eponymous 'Bharata', 'Actor'. As to chronology, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* we have is clearly a composite work collecting the traditions of the actors.[4] The essential doctrine of 'taste' *(rasa)*, aesthetic experience (as we shall see), presupposed by everything else, appears to have been established by the second century BC, or even the fourth century BC: Pāṇini's *'sūtras* of the actors' (IV.3.110) are likely to have been the kernel of the eventual *śāstra*. The *Tolkāppiyam* is usually dated in the first century BC and in any case derives from the same tradition (with the same eight *rasas*), though earlier than the extant *Nāṭyaśāstra* text (undated but not earlier than the second century AD). Indirect testimony for the development of technical senses of *rasa*, including 'joy' and 'accomplishment', is found in the Pali *Tipiṭaka* (*Aṅguttara*, *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, etc.) and its Commentaries, i.e., from about the fourth century BC onwards.[5] However, the exact starting point is immaterial for us here and we need not now explore the *Veda* for *rasa*. Suffice it that this was an ancient Indian (Sanskrit) word when it was appropriated for an aesthetic concept and applied in the theatre.

Since *rasa* seems originally to have meant 'juice', 'fluid', 'essence' and especially 'taste' as one of the sense objects (with *rasanā* as the 'tongue'), its use in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* for what is accomplished in the theatre *(rasaniṣpatti)*, the pleasure or joy of the audience *(bhuñjānāḥ . . . sumanasaḥ prekṣakāḥ)*,[6] implies that it is a sensation which the audience enjoys if the actors do their work successfully. The audience sees the actors and hears them, but in what sense does it taste them? Of course only in a figurative sense: the 'taste' is of the invisible and inaudible aspect of the drama and the *Nāṭyaśāstra* makes it clear that it is the emotions (*bhāvas*) that create this.

It is the play itself, the dramatic action and human passions behind their visible and audible expression, which the spectators perceive in their minds and enjoy (experience 'joy', *harṣa*, *Nāṭyaśāstra)*. We can therefore accept Gnoli's translation of *rasa* as 'aesthetic experience'.[7] It is the fundamental concept of Indian aesthetics. From the theatre it was extended to the other arts, which we shall touch on below.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* discusses the aesthetic experience from the practical point of view of the actors working to produce it. The main emotions (*bhāvas*) in the plays, dominating the action, called

sthāyibhāvas, 'staying' or 'lasting' or 'enduring emotions', were found to be eight in number. This number is not accounted for in the *Nāṭyaśāstra;* it seems to be taken as a fact of observation. These staying emotions are: love (*rati*), mirth, grief, anger, courage (or energy, *utsāha*), fear, disgust and astonishment. Other emotions, which are many, are merely 'transient' (*vyabhicārin*), for example pride, depression, shame.

The emotions do not actually occur in the theatre, though they are understood to be in the drama. The actors are expected not to experience them but to act as if they did: to speak and gesticulate accordingly, part of which is to use conventions of acting to project 'emotions' to the audience, part based on the world, on their own past experience. Thus they act the effects of emotion, since the supposed staying emotions cannot be made directly visible. The professional actor will not really feel the emotions, but must control his acting to project their effects in speech, expression (facial) and gesture. The causes of emotion (other characters, the situation, the season, news, expectations, experiencing entertainments and games, etc.) are present or are described by the characters, fitting the effects. The characters are not present in person but only represented by the actors; their emotions, if supposed to be historical, ceased to exist long ago. But the members of the audience imagine that they are perceiving actual emotions in the characters. It is these emotions imagined, from their causes and effects shown by the actors, that create the real experience of the audience, which is not the emotions but an aesthetic experience. They are, for example, not in love with the actors or with the imagined characters; or if any of them are, this has no more relevance to the play than the private lives of the actors. An emotional reaction to an incident in the play by a member of the audience would be due either to some intense experience he remembered, breaking his enjoyment of the play, or to inexperience of the theatre.

The 'taste' or aesthetic experience had by the audience is, according to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Tolkāppiyam,* of eight kinds corresponding to their staying emotions. Their names are adjectives qualifying *rasa:* 'brilliant' (or 'pointed', vaguely 'sensitive'; see below), comic, compassionate, furious, heroic, apprehensive, horrific and marvellous.

It is evident that the relations between these kinds of experience and their emotions vary. In fact the explanations in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*

vary,[8] whilst the *Tolkāppiyam* appears to confuse them (III.246-47). But if the 'commentators' referred to by Subrahmanya are right in taking the staying emotions and 'expressives' (*sāttvikas*) as 'one', this may reflect the old 'expression-acting' we have conjectured[4] to be one of Abhinavagupta's 'five parts' of drama and to refer to *rasa.* Thus we should understand Tolkāppiyaṉār as implying that a staying emotion produces the 'same' ('one', i.e., similar) *rasa.* This will have to be clarified by Tamil scholars.

According to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*[8] the staying emotion is usually the 'essence' (*ātman*) of the aesthetic experience: mirth of the comic, anger of the furious, courage of the heroic, disgust of the horrific, fear of the apprehensive and astonishment of the marvellous. But grief is instead the 'source' (*prabhava*) of the compassionate. Love likewise is the 'source' of the brilliant (*śṛṅgāra*), but it is added that the 'essence' of the brilliant is 'brilliant dress' (*ujjvala veṣa*): a person wearing brilliant dress is said to be 'possessing brilliance' (*śṛṅgāravant*, i.e., *ujjvala* and *śṛṅgāra* are synonyms). This is because whatever is pure, fresh or beautiful in the world is compared with (variant: 'inferred through') the brilliant (*śṛṅgāra*). Moreover the brilliant has a 'cause' (*hetu*): 'women and men'; which seems a qualification of the 'source' (love). The characters are at 'the height of youth'. Thus the brilliant is complex. The furious also is complex: anger is its 'essence', but its 'source' is 'demons and haughty humans' and its 'cause' is war.

Clearly this method of exciting aesthetic experience is not the result of speculation, but of practice: the way the actors got desired results. In six cases the staying emotion is called the 'essence' of the corresponding aesthetic experience, which cannot mean they are the same but only that they are similar. The brilliant has an essence, but that is not the staying emotion, or any emotion, being 'brilliant dress' (which might be an effect of emotion). The brilliant and the compassionate have the staying emotion instead as 'source'. The furious besides its essence has demons and haughty humans as 'source' and war as 'cause'; the brilliant has women and men as 'cause'. Only the brilliant and the furious have all three components, but they are in no way parallel. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* gives many other details under each aesthetic experience, mostly on causes and effects of emotion to be acted or described and the appropriate transient emotions to be acted with each.

It seems to have been an afterthought, when the present first

chapter was added to the *Nāṭyaśāstra,* that the gods asked Brahmā to give them something playful (*krīḍanīyaka,* 'making sport'), i.e., enjoyable, to replace the old *Vedas,* no longer adequate in an unhappy age. He then created drama (*nāṭya*) for them, which would be essentially playful (*lalita,* 18), but as it would contain matter from all branches of knowledge it would also be instructive (and so replace the *Vedas*).[9]

As opposed to the practice of the actors, outlined in the *Nāṭyaśāstra,* later critics, who were scholars and philosophers, set out theories about what happened in the theatre. Thus Daṇḍin (late seventh century AD), Udbhaṭa (late eighth century) and Lollaṭa (early ninth century) thought that the *rasa* was simply the staying emotion increased. This seems a simplification rather than a theory, though Udbhaṭa's and Lollaṭa's[10] commentaries on the *Nāṭyaśāstra,* where one would expect a full explanation, are lost. It may appear to agree with Tolkāppiyaṉār's commentators. But how does grief increase to the compassionate?

Śaṅkuka (mid-ninth century), followed by Mahiman (eleventh century), seeing the inadequacy of this 'increase' theory, proposed that the staying emotions were inferred by the audience from their causes and effects shown (they were not directly sensed, not being present). The aesthetic experience is then an 'imitation' of the staying emotion.[11]

Nāyaka (late ninth century) objected that if the theories of Lollaṭa or Śaṅkuka were true the audience would actually experience the unpleasant emotions (such as disgust, fear and presumably grief). But on the contrary the aesthetic experience was always enjoyable, therefore something quite different from the emotion, a generalised experience, detached, like meditation.[12] The Jaina authors Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra (twelfth century) similarly held that all aesthetic experiences, including those one might think are unpleasant, delight audiences.[13] The Buddhist writer (in Pali) Saṅgharakkhita (twelfth century) likewise observed that the compassionate and other experiences which appear to be unhappy do in fact delight audiences, as in the case of the *Vessantara Jātaka* (the hero's grief).[14]

Abhinavagupta (*c.* AD 1000) stressed the universalisation and transcendence in aesthetic experience: the individual emotions of the spectators are not excited but, being detached, they perceive the emotions of others.[15] This is the highest happiness. He states clearly

that the emotion perceived (in the play) is not experienced: *rasa* is tasted, does not go beyond tasting.[16]

Bhoja (first half of the eleventh century) offers what appears to be a totally opposed theory to explain the same fact of enjoyment.[17] Instead of universalisation he describes the aesthetic experience as supreme self-assertion (*abhimāna*) or egoism (*ahaṃkāra*). Ultimately there is only one aesthetic experience, the brilliant. The emotion love ceases to be an emotion but absorbs all the other emotions into itself as love of these and so becomes the aesthetic experience 'egoism'. This is because each emotion is a type of love, for example, one loves mirth or even being indignant (a transient). Each emotion, if developed in the theatre or other literature, ends in 'love' (*preman,* a synonym). Self-assertion, which is joy, or the brilliant is once called a quality of this egoism, but usually they are said to be the same (but we have learned to be cautious about things in some sense the same).

By way of explanation Bhoja says that originally (at the 'ultimate' or 'former point') *rasa* is simply itself, the original egoism of a living being, 'made of pride' (not art but nature). On the basis of this, emotions are possible, which is the 'intermediate state', with many emotions and many aesthetic experiences developing (the usual eight plus a few more). Lastly, at the 'highest point' or 'utmost limit', love, the 'queen' (*rati* is feminine) of the emotions, having absorbed all the others into herself and ceased to be an emotion, becomes 'egoism' (this time not nature but aesthetic experience arisen from art). The 'self' has asserted itself, 'realised' itself, instead of (with Abhinavagupta) forgetting itself in a universalised experience which is detached. At this point the difference between Abhinavagupta and Bhoja seems to depend in part on their conceptions of a 'soul' ('self'), which are speculative and hardly open to scientific investigation (certainly not in the eleventh century). So the development of the science of aesthetics reaches a limit beyond which it tends to speculation or subjectivity or criteria other than art. Nārāyaṇa and Dharmadatta (fourteenth century) proposed the marvellous as the utmost experience in place of Bhoja's brilliant.[18] Rūpa Gosvāmin substituted religious devotion, Kavikarṇapūra returned to speculation about 'delight'.[19]

The aesthetic experience had long been seen as the goal of all (art-) literature *(kāvya),* of which drama is the supreme form.[20] The *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself shows that music (singing, instrumental music

and dancing) produces aesthetic experience and expounds music in detail as part of theatre. Later works on music develop *rasa* theory in relation to it.[21] Writers on painting state that knowledge of painting depends on knowledge of dancing, i.e., of gestures, movements and expressions, in fact of the whole method of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, leading to the aesthetic experience.[22] Paintings may produce nine *rasa*s, in temples, palaces and houses.[23] Sculpture[24] and architecture[25] can then be understood, evidently as dependent on painting and producing the same aesthetic experiences. In other words all art is fundamentally one and excites the same kind of enjoyment. Bhoja composed a book on architecture and engineering, the *Samarāṅganasūtradhāra*, where he says for example that a beautiful house excites astonishment or wonder, implying the marvellous experience, as well as love (*rati*),[26] implying the brilliant (as his highest experience). He does not develop this discussion far, but various types of building will excite different experiences, as fortifications the heroic and perhaps the furious. Bhoja mentions eleven *rasa*s in painting.[27]

In writing on aesthetics in literature, Bhoja shows that the description of a landscape (in a play) may produce the 'affectionate' (*preyas;* one of his additional aesthetic experiences), where the sounds of roaring mountain rivers are described to Rāma:[28]

> These are the Southern Mountains, their highest
> blue peaks supported by clouds,
> the gurgling roaring of the waters of the Godāvarī
> in their gorges;
> These are the sacred confluences of rivers with deep
> waters, wild
> with the clamourings of turbulent waves confused
> by repulsing one another.
>
> *Uttararamacarita* II. 30

This suggests landscape painting working in the same way.

The conclusion on aesthetics in India is that art is enjoyable not because it excites people's emotions but because it transmutes emotions into aesthetic experience. The *Nāṭyaśāstra*, being a concise handbook for actors and originating in oral tradition, gives no illustrations. Abhinavagupta, Bhoja and many other later writers on drama illustrate all its details from plays, thus developing literary criticism by applying aesthetics in their analysis.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* treats many aspects of dramatic language, speech being one of the kinds of acting. It has (dramatic) 'characteristics' including figures such as simile, 'qualities' such as clarity, metres, dialects, intonation, types of play and the construction of plots out of stories. These topics also are illustrated by many later writers. Some of these aspects are the subjects of separate treatises on 'ornament' (*alaṅkāra*, not superficial ornaments, however, but the intrinsic beauties of literature), including all beauties of expression and meaning, though later writers sometimes restrict it to figures of speech. These are copiously illustrated from the literature and further extend the scope of criticism, but a few late writers take a perverse pride in manufacturing their own examples, thus excluding themselves from the field of criticism.

The earliest known examination of figures is by the lexicographer Yāska[29] (fourth century BC or earlier), as linguistic phenomena. Qualities such as clarity and sweetness are required by Kauṭalya (fourth century BC) in the composition of royal edicts.[30] These may be sought in the inscriptions of Aśoka Maurya in the third century BC.[31] A much more elaborate prose style, with long compounds and very long sentences, is found in the edict of Rudradāman (I, *c.* AD 150) inscribed at Girinagara, where the scribe has praised the royal author for the qualities of being clear, sweet, charming (*kānta*), etc.[32]

Bhāmaha's (fifth century) *Kāvyālaṅkāra*[33] is the earliest text, other than the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, on the beauty (*alaṅkāra*) of literature known to be extant. He says first (I.2) that literature (*kāvya*) produces joy (*prīti*) and expertise in the ends of life, in agreement with the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, adding 'fame' (for the author). The *Nāṭyaśāstra* has in view the success of the actors and devotes a chapter (XXVII) to this. Bhāmaha says (I.4-5) that to produce a good *kāvya* the author must have genius (*pratibhā*), it cannot be learned from a teacher. A good epic (*sargabandha*) will produce all eight aesthetic experiences (I.21) and Bhāmaha clearly understands that good literature in all forms will do this. But he refers to 'others' (i.e., the *Nāṭyaśāstra*) for the details of drama (I.24), which includes those of aesthetic experience, which need not be repeated. Even a science (*śāstra*) can be enjoyed if mixed with the *rasa* of sweet *kāvya* (V.3). The eight *rasas*, when they emerge especially powerfully, are called the beauty 'having aesthetic experience' (*rasavant*) (III.6). Kuntaka[34] (eleventh century) says *rasavant* should pervade all the other beauties (which Bhāmaha

surely would agree with), but is itself part of the subject-matter (III.11,15), since he restricts 'figures' to the expression (not the meaning). Bhāmaha excludes this, his figures being 'beauties' of the meaning and his 'expression' restricted to grammar, whose modes may be varied to give it beauty (chapter VI). Where other 'beauties' of meaning are absent, Bhāmaha would clearly accept aesthetic experience as giving beauty, which would be *rasavant.* Saṅgharakkhita[14] (twelfth century), who generally follows Bhāmaha, explains *rasavanta,* his last 'beauty of meaning' (*atthālaṅkāra*) (IV, verse 335), by setting out the *Nāṭyaśāstra* doctrine of the aesthetic experience, emotion, causes of emotion, effects of emotion, etc. as his chapter V.

Kāvya, says Bhāmaha (I.16), is expression (*śabda*) and meaning (*artha*) combined. But both must be beautiful (*alaṅkāra*), which means they are 'curved' (*vakra*), i.e., figurative, varied, indirect (I.36, V.66). 'Curvedness' (*vakratā*) is a test for acceptable 'beauties' of meaning (II.85), such as exaggeration (with a pretext, II. 81ff.) or fancy (II.91); mere statement of a cause, or of news, is rejected (II.86-87). As in the case of *rasavant,* the selection of beautiful details satisfies the principle of curvedness. *Kāvya* is based on the world (V.33), but must be *rasavant* (V.62). Arguments, inference, should be logical, but the middle terms and examples must be beautiful in literature (chapter V). A 'proposition' to be proved (*pratijñā*) becomes a 'vow' to be carried out. As for the 'qualities' and 'styles', these are merely pleasant to the ears if there is no developed meaning or curved expression (I.34). But clarity and sweetness are desirable everywhere.

Bhāmaha bases his exposition on actual examples from literature, mostly no longer available to us, as well as on earlier works on *alaṅkāra.* The beauties in these examples consist in surprise and in the projection of other emotions, such as love, mirth, pride, courage, doubt, dissimulation, etc.; reflection also is an emotion in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* list of transients and gives scope for philosophising, real or ironical, in a 'corroboration'. Stressing not theory but observation, Bhāmaha's examples are fresh, showing the specificity and immediacy of good authorship, where universal truths shine through sharp, instant detail, not at the end of long argument. These examples, often paralleled in the surviving early literature, and critical observations bearing on Aśvaghoṣa (a cacophonous verb form), Bhāsa, Śūdraka, Meṇṭha and Kālidāsa, are the effective

beginning, as far as we are able to see, of literary criticism in India, of detailed analysis of individual works and authors.

Among later critics the most significant are Ānandavardhana[35] (ninth century), who revised Bhāmaha's indirectness as 'revealed' (*vyaṅgya*) or 'implied' (*pratīyamāna*) meanings, *rasa* harmonising with this because it is always indirect; Kuntaka[34] (eleventh century?) who illustrated six linguistic levels of curvedness or indirectness (*vakratā*): phonetic, lexical, grammatical, sentential, contextual and (entire) compositional; where the three higher levels also support the meaning, especially *rasa*; of course Abhinavagupta; and Bhoja,[17] who has three levels: word, sentence and composition, but twelve aspects of combination of expression and meaning, where the four highest aspects apply to both sentences and compositions: there are forty-eight genres of composition having *rasa*, which is never absent from good literature.

If we collect references to a given *kāvya* by the critics, as has been done in *Indian Kāvya Literature* vols. II-VI but which we have no space to illustrate here, we can see the works of Bhāravi, Mātrarāja, Bhavabhūti and others as wholes in relation to their sources and in their parts fitting together to produce aesthetic experience. Their subject-matter is human nature, human emotions, their aesthetics is based on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and literary criticism in India reaches its highest point in the eleventh century with Kuntaka and Bhoja.

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19. Kavikarṇapūra, *Alaṅkārakaustubha*, ed. by Sivaprasad Bhattacharya, Rajshahi, Varendra Research Society, 1926 and 1934, Chapter V.
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22. *Viṣṇudharmottara* III, ed. by P. Shah with a study, Baroda, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, 1958-61, *adhyāya* 2.
23. III, *adhyāyas* 41-43 (see ref. 22 above).
24. III, *adhyāyas* 44ff. (see ref. 22 above).
25. III, *adhyāyas* 86ff. (see ref. 22 above).
26. Bhoja, *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra*, ed. by Gaṇapati and revised by V.S. Agrawala, Baroda, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, 1966, XXXI. 18-19.
27. LXXXII (see ref. 26 above).
28. *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* (see ref. 17 above), vol. II p. 560.
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11

Anthologies, Gnomic Verses and Aphorisms

Sukumari Bhattacharji

The different genres discussed in this article are not mutually exclusive; they overlap and coalesce with one another to a considerable extent. Yet the separate strands can be somehow disentangled substantially and treated as largely independent genres.

Mainstream classical Sanskrit poetry with true creative power came to a virtual end about the close of the eighth century. A little earlier, in the seventh century Bāṇabhaṭṭa and Mayurabhaṭṭa composed the *Caṇḍīśataka* and the *Sūryaśataka* respectively. Despite profuse use of periphrasis, hyperbole, *double entendre* and several other artificial devices, these two centuries of verses, the first addressed to the goddess Caṇḍī, the second to the sun-god, have a thematic cohesion and both display occasional sparks of imagination. As *khaṇḍakāvyas*, short poems, they are in a direct line with Kālidāsa whose juvenile *Ṛtusaṃhāra* and the mature *Meghadūta* of superb poetic beauty ushered in this new genre. The *khaṇḍakāvya* came into its own when, after the erudite but aesthetically unsatisfactory *Śiśupālavadha* of Māgha, poets realized that composing long derivative epics with subjects culled from the two primary epics and the *Purāṇas* had come to a dead end. So they turned to the *khaṇḍakāvya* which offered them a yet untrodden avenue.

Ghaṭakarpara, traditionally regarded as a contemporary of Kālidāsa, composed two collections of verses: the *Nītisāra,* didactic in nature, and the other nameless one known as the *Ghaṭakarparakāvya* in which a wife, separated from her husband sends her message of love and languishment through a cloud. Clearly, the poet employs Kālidāsa's device. Poetically the work is of indifferent value, especially because the *double entendre* in all its 22 verses betrays a serious lapse in taste.

Khaṇḍakāvyas by one author can be on a single or different classified themes. Kālidāsa's two short poems, and Bāṇa's and Mayūra's pieces are examples of the first category, while Bhartṛhari's *Śatakatraya,* three centuries of verses on three different themes, belong to the second. The *Nītiśataka* deals with ethical maxims based mainly on the worldly man's observation of social and familial life seen from a distance, which gives the poet the necessary detachment for generalizing on its various aspects. Some of these are quite effective as poetry: "the place of the proud and worthy man, as of the flower, is either on the heads of men (as garlands) or in the forest where he languishes in solitude." (st. 26). "The patient man's poise is never ruffled; even if the fire is bent downwards, its flame ever points upwards." (st. 77).

The *Vairāgyaśataka,* however, strikes an altogether different note; its verses are inspired by genuine detachment, even abhorrence of life in society. These verses praise an ascetic life, the life of a roving mendicant. His sole companion is nature. "I live on one tasteless hash of a beggar's meal a day, the earth is my bedstead, my only kin is my own body, a miserable tattered coverlet is my sole garment — ah me, even now, Desire does not leave me alone." (st. 15). A beautiful and deservedly popular stanza reads, "What if you have gained all your objects of desire, have placed your foot on the heads of your adversaries, have gained friends through your riches, what if you manage to live for ages on end — what then, oh what then, what then? (st. 67). The extremely poignant refrain; 'tatah kim' vibrates disturbingly. About Bhartṛhari J.J. Meyer made the perceptive comment "one right characteristic brain of old India."

Although the *Śṛngāraśataka* literally professes to be on love, yet at least two-thirds of its contents do not deal with love directly, but warn man against women, their charms and wiles; they seduce innocent men and are but the veritable gateway to hell. Part of this

śataka deals with the seasons and other allied subjects. A small section, however, deals directly with love, and this section has quite a few unforgettable verses. "When present, she verily is ambrosia itself, out of sight, she is pure venom." (st. 44). The 'gate of hell' perspective is mitigated by verses like. "Life! to go through your expanse would be an impossibly difficult task, if there were not these women with wine in their eyes" (st. 33). Another verse says, "in this world there is the shame and stigma of having to serve a tyrannical ruler for the sake of livelihood; how could a self-respecting gentleman preserve his pride and fortitude without these lotus-eyed ones whose frames store the beams of the rising moon, who dangle lovely waistbands and have shapely breasts and waists" (st. 31).

To this category of collections of verses by the same author belongs Sundara-pāṇḍya's *Nītiśatikā* of 115-120 verses in the *āryā* metre, possibly composed in south India in the middle of the seventh century. It is a didactic work without any literary distinction. One Amūru Vedavyāsa composed a century of didactic verses, the *Nītiśataka*. Here moral precepts are illustrated with epic references but even this fails to redeem its utter mediocrity.

While Bhartṛhari treats three different moods in three separate centuries of verses, each held together by the unity of the theme — the eighth century poet Amaru, the author of the *Amaruśataka* treats different phases and aspects of love in about a hundred verses.[1] Here each stanza is in a different metre.

Bhartṛhari and Amaru usher in the second phase of anthological literature: each of the three *śatakas* of Bhartṛhari has a common theme but the stanzas are in diverse metres just as they are in Amaru: each stanza is a separate and complete poem. This, then, is the beginning of the later category of anthology which came to stay. Amaru is a superb artist; his treatment of the different moods of the lover and the beloved lady has a true ring. Not only does he depict the textbook moods of expectation, waiting, tryst, passionate union, dejection languishing and injured pride, but he is one of the very few Sanskrit poets who actually describe the death of love. One such unusual stanza says, "Where a mere frown expressed anger, where silence was torture, where a smile at each other was a conciliatory gesture, a mere glance a favour, behold the death of that love now: you roll at my feet and, I, the cruel one cannot relent even now." Amaru depicts the entire gamut of the lover's experiences, and depicts each mood authentically.

Amaru was followed by Nāgarāja whose *Bhāvaśataka* seeks to portray love's moods but the verses are wholly lifeless and without any poetic merit. He relies on boundless hyperboles and slavish adherence to the textbook rules of poetics. The result is a century of barren verses. The futility is further enhanced by his pretentious handling of his theme, for, he posits the various moods as conundrums and acts as his own commentator by applying the solutions to the riddles in the last sections of the verses.

Ānandavardhana, a famous ninth-century writer on poetics composed his *Devīśataka,* a doxology on the *Prima Dea* in a hundred verses. Here there is uniformity of theme and prosodic structure. To Śaṅkarācārya of the same century is ascribed the *Śatślokī,* a century of Vedāntic verses in the *sragdharā* metre. To this period also belongs a collection of five hundred verses praising the goddess: this is known as the *Mūkapañcaśatī.* Also in the ninth century the poet Līlaśuka[2] composed his *Kṛṣṇakarṇāmṛta.* These verses became very popular; they blended the devotional and the erotic sentiments. Śilhaṇa, the Kashmiri poet working in Bengal wrote his *Śāntiśataka,* a century of verses mainly in the detached temper of renunciation.

The first attempts at compilation of other poets' verses possibly goes back to the beginning of the Christian era but those works have not come down to us. Such collections of verses by famous poets were probably augmented with stanzas of inferior, unknown poets attributed to great masters in *majorem gloriam;* this was possibly their only chance for survival. Such phenomena became quite common and we remember how hopelessly 'bad' poetry was passed off as Kālidāsa's.

The tenth century saw Amitagati's *Subhāṣitaratnasandoha, a* collection of 922 memorable verses in 32 sections expressing the Digambara Jain's ethical values. It deals with anger, greed, arrogance, truth, wisdom, old age, death, the good man and the villain, the defects and vices of women. The *Subhāṣitamuktāvalī* by Sṛṅgārālāpa[3] is a collection of erotic verses between the end of the tenth and the beginning of eleventh centuries.

The later anthologies are mostly collections of stray verses of many authors on diverse themes compiled by later poets. Such collections begin to appear by the eleventh century. About the earliest one is Govardhana's famous, *Āryāsaptaśatī* seven hundred stanzas in the *āryā* metre. The subject is love in its various manifestations. This bulk of seven hundred verses must have

become a fashion, for Paramānanda also compiled seven hundred verses in his *Śṛṅgārasaptaśatikā*,[4] and seven hundred verses on erotic subjects have little chance of attracting sustained attention of readers unless there is real inspiration which these works sadly lack.

Possibly one of the most famous of the later anthologies is Vidyākara's *Kavīndravacanasamuccaya*, better known as *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*, a tenth-century compilation.[5] The number of its verses varies from 525 and 1000 to 1728 in the different palm-leaf manuscripts. The edited text as we have it now has 1739 verses divided into fifty *vrajyās*, sections. Of these the first six are on different gods, the seventh on the sun-god, sections 8-13 on the seasons, 14-26 describe the different erotic moods and 32-50 are on miscellaneous subjects. The editor, Ludwik Sternbach, commenting on this kind of poetic anthologies says, "probably no other literature in the world can be compared with Sanskrit literature as far as the variety of subjects dealt with in short epigrams is concerned. Sanskrit poets cultivate poetry to such an extent that every work, whether on love or hate, life or death, and even on law, philosophy, logic, horses and manure was written in verse. The condensation of thought in a short verse was masterly performed and epigrams on different subjects of life are found in almost all poetical works. They were composed in verse because their shortness and condensed nature made it easier for a common reader to commit them to memory."

A couple of centuries later, the Kashmiri poet Śambhu compiled the *Anyoktimuktālatāśataka*, a collection of other poets' verses which the compiler regarded as precious as[6] 'a chain of pearls'. Śrīdharadāsa's famous work the *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* compiled in 1205 AD in Bengal is divided into 5 *pravāhas*, each of which subdivided into *vīcis* (billows) of five verses. Altogether there are 2380 verses. Śrīdharadāsa includes 485 authors who are not known from other sources. Bhogadatta Jalhaṇa's *Sūktimuktāvalī* (1258 AD) is also another famous collection of 2710 verses divided into 133 *paddhatis* or sections. The work is known in a shorter and a longer version and quotes 240 authors. The first seventeen sections dwell on poets and poetry, the rest on charity, joy, fate, wisdom, wickedness and sundry other ethical and social subjects.

In the next century we have the famous *Śārṅgadharapaddhati* by Śārṅgadhara (compiled in 1363 AD). Divided into 163 *paddhatis*, it

has a total of 4689 verses, didactic and descriptive in nature. There is a possibility of there being 6300 verses in the original version; selection and rejection reduced the number. The subject-matter is quite mundane, for, we are also treated to practical advice on gardening, horses, omens, portents, swords, etc. One is faintly reminded of Hesiod's *Works and Days* but that had more compactness and coherence in its subject. There was an earlier inflated version, the *Bṛhacchārṅgadharapaddhati* containing 7586 verses in 588 *paddhatis*. Sūryakalingaraja's *Sūktiratnakāra* is another insignificant collection of 2377 verses in 4 *parvans*. Sāyaṇa's *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi*[7] may have been the same as the *Sūktiratanahāra* although the printed text is somewhat different. Both belong to the earlier half of the fourteenth century and in both the verses are arrranged in the same way. The 4 *parvans* deal with the 4 *vargas*, viz., *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (mundane pursuits), *kāma* (love) and *mokṣa* (liberation). The poet pontificates and the result is a dry and fatiguing anthology. One Vyāsa's *Subhāṣitasaṃgraha* lifts most of its 98 sententious verses bodily from the *Sūktiratnahāra*. Anthologists frequently took recourse to overt plagiarism.

During the fifteenth century we have several anthologies. Kusumadeva's *Dṛṣṭāntaśataka* is a century of saws, Dakṣiṇamūrti collects 96 verses on devotion in his *Lokoktimuktāvalī*. Both are deplorably devoid of any literary merit. Among the anonymous anthologies two short pieces, the *Pūrvacātakāṣṭaka* and the *Uttaracātkāṣṭaka*, are beautiful love poems of 8 verses each. Dyādviveda's *Nītimañjarī* has about 165 gnomic and didactic verses. He illustrates his maxims with legends from the Vedas, quoting Vedic verses and even exegetical texts from Sāyaṇa, passages from Yājñavalkya, Manu and the epics.

A new variety is ushered in the *Purāṇārthasaṃgraha* which presents a dialouge between Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa in 30 chapters and 136 verses. The first part of each verse is an epigram, the rest of the verse is the explication. Among other collections of dialogue verses may be mentioned dialogues between men and women, and gods and goddesses, male and female animals and birds. Thus Rāmacandrāgāmin's *Siddhāntasudhātaṭinī* is a dialogue between a man and a woman, while the *Śṛṅgārajñānanirṇaya* between Śuka and Rambhā, the *Madanamukhacandrapeṭikā* is between a young woman and a mendicant and Ghaṭakarpara's *Nītisāra* is between a hog and a lion. The anonymous *Vānāraṣṭaka* and *Vānaryāṣṭaka* are dialogues between a male and a female monkey.

Vallabhadeva's *Subhāṣitāvalī* is an anthology of verses by 360 poets, quite insignificant as far as literary merit goes. Between the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century was composed the famous Bengali Vaiṣṇava author Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Padyāvalī* containing 387 verses of 129 different poets; it is of devotional character. Harihara from Mithila compiled the *Sūktimuktāvalī* and the *Subhāṣitahārāvalī* in the seventeeth century. A different *Subhaṣitahārāvalī* is by a Deccan poet, Harikavi, who prepared the text towards the later part of the seventeenth century. Another seventeenth century compilation is Jagannātha's *Bhāminīvilāsa*[8] which shares some common features with Bhartṛhari's *Śatakatraya;* it praises Kṛṣṇa. Jagannātha also composed the *Aśvadhātī,* 70 stray verses of gnomic and devotional character. Lakṣmaṇabhaṭṭa's *Padyaracanā,* Gadādharabhaṭṭa's *Rasikajīvana.*[9] Veṇīdatta's *Padyaveṇī* Govindajit's *Sabhyālamkaraṇa.*[10] Haribhāskara's *Padyāmṛtataraṅgiṇī.*[11] Sundaradatta's *Sūktisundara*[12] (which praises earlier and contemporary Muslim rulers), Vrajanātha's *Padyataraṅgiṇī*[13] or Vidyākaramisra's *Vidyākarasahasraka,* a collection of one thousand stanzas[14]— all these are wholly non-descript works as far as literary merits go. And this is by no means an exhaustive catalogue.

Later compilation of anthologies include *Subhāṣitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra*[15] which contains 7613 moral precepts. And finally the *Mahāsubhāṣitasaṃgraha* has fifty to sixty thousand maxims and descriptive verses. Perhaps the latest of such modern compendiums was D.D. Kosambi's edition of the *Śatakatrayādisubhāsitaṣamgrha.* Based on 377 mss of Bhartṛhari's three *śataka*s and other allied works, it is a selection of the better verses with some claim to literary merit and artistic finish. Kosambi's edition, also collects other poets' inferior verses bearing some affinity to Bhartṛhari's three centuries of verses.

Among authors of satirical pieces Kṣemendra rather stands out, for, despite some crudities and occasional lapses in taste he took upon himself the task of exposing the sham, and the institutionalized fraud and deception in his *Kalāvilāsa, Deśopadeśa, Narmamālā, Darpadalana* and *Samayamātṛkā.* He is generally elegant and his satire is polished, used as a weapon and a social corrective. In this he is quite successful. Much later Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita composed the *Anyādeśaśataka,* and *Kaliviḍambana* in the same vein but with much less success. Vedāntadeśika[16] wrote his *Subhāṣitanīvi* with the aim

of exposing pride, wickedness and other social vices, but the work also includes verses on peace and nobility; it is a mixed fare with some satirical elements.

Apart from satires we have a short literature of various kinds of riddles. In the *Brahmodya*s of the *Upaniṣad*s we have the rudiments of riddles; there the riddle form reflected the majestic and arcane nature of the subject of those symposiums. Later, in the *Mahābhārata* we have the riddle form revived in the dialogue between Dharma disguised as a crane and Yudhiṣṭhira; here, too, the serious nature of the subject determines the apparently cryptic form of the dialogue. In the Buddhist *Samyutta Nikāya* or the Jain Bhavadeva Sūri's *Pārśvanāthacaritra* this form is adopted. In the sixth century Daṇḍin in the *Kāvyādarśa* defines sixteen varieties of riddles, including conundrums, logogriphs, anagrams, etc. The riddle as a genre is not strictly a literary form but popular interest has given it a long life; it flourished parallelly with the literary genres. Without emotional, aesthetic or intellectual content, it is also of an inferior order; yet it survived as a popular pastime. Many riddles are collected in anthologies and divided into categories according to the nature of their content. But the compilation of riddles into anthologies is a rather late phenomenon. It began in the thirteenth century when Dharmadāsa compiled his famous *Vidagdhamukhamaṇḍana* divided into 4 chapters with a total of 220 verses in Sanskrit and Prākṛt. The *prahelikā*s (conundrums) are so difficult to unravel that commentators have come forward to help solve them. The work is intelligible only to the erudite. So these riddles are not popular, but a cultivated pastime of the elite. Nāgarāja[17] collected 101 (or 102) puzzles in his *Bhāvaśataka*. The text employs both Sanskrit and Prākṛt as well as many different metres. The work is erotic in content. The *Samasyādīpa* and *Sītāvinoda Kāvya* are both anonymous. The first is in 175 verses of which 76 appear as nonsense but are really conundrums solved by explicatory verses supplied by the author himself. The second composes riddles on Sītā languishing for Rāma. The very subject should have precluded the use of cryptic language, but such good literary taste and sense of aesthetic propriety is too much to expect from riddle-makers.

Aphorisms, apart from those in collections of gnomic and didactic verses generally denoted *sūtra*s, any formulaic composition of utmost brevity—a pre-printing mnemonic device. Aphoristic literature is found in the *Vedāṅga sūtra*s, and in philosophical and

grammatical *sūtras* of all schools. A significant area of Buddhist doctrines is in the *sūtra*[18] form; sometimes these refer to some classes of gods, demons, sometimes even men of some moral excellence are the speaker or the hero. The Jain Guṇabhadra's *Uttarapurāṇa* and *Ātmānuśāsana* are examples of aphoristic literature as is Amitagati's *Dharmaparīkṣā* which is dogmatic and polemical in character and yet aims at amusing or entertaining readers at the cost of reducing his targets to butts of ridicules.

Another short genre of aphoristic literature clusters around Cāṇakya,[19] the renowned author of the famous treatise on polity, the *Arthaśāstra*. While this major text is composed in short formulas which require hermeneutic assistance for comprehension, a short literature grew up around him. The *Cāṇakyanīti* collects epigrams and maxims on polity. It, however, covers a number of allied topics; some of these rise above exigency and advocate high ethical values; many of the maxims are culled from the epics, *Purāṇas*, *Dharmaśāstras* and literature. Regarding the identity of the author, it must be admitted that there is little concrete evidence of his personality and achievements. Texts composed on similar themes or in similar forms are passed on to this famous name, presumably for the preservation of such texts. An ornate version is called *Vṛddhacāṇakya* or *Cāṇakyanītidarpaṇa;* it has 342 verses divided into 17 chapters. Another *textus simplicior* is also regarded as composed by Cāṇakya. It however, has fewer verses, only 109-173 in 8 chapters. The more familiar *Cāṇakyanītisāra* or simply *Cāṇakyaśloka* has 108 maxims with some supplementary verses, clearly appended to the main text by later authors passed off as the eponymous author's. These maxims teach social and political conduct to the man about the world. The *Cāṇakyasārasaṃgraha* is a collection of 300 verses divided into three centuries. The *Laghucāṇakya* which never gained the popularity of the above works has 3 introductory verses and a short text of 83-97 verses divided into 8 short chapters. And finally, the *Cāṇakyarājanītiśāstra* is a less known but bulky text; apart from 5 introductory and a concluding verse, its main body had 258-658 verses in the different mss. These verses are better chiselled and have a greater literary finish than the rest of this literature. It borrows stanzas from other Sanskrit literature—the epics, *Purāṇas*, *Dharmaśāstras* and even from the the floating oral literature. No wonder, then, that the text travelled beyond the boundaries of the country to Tibet, Mongolia, Manchuria, Sri Lanka, Burma, Laos, Cambodia and even to some countries in the Middle East.

Gnomic, didactic and aphoristic verses were composed by poets of different ages and places; sometimes these were collected by the poets themselves, while at other times they found a place in anthologies compiled by later authors. These verses cover almost the entire gamut of human experience—from devotion, love, greed, hate, revenge, deceit to kindness, charity, self-sacrifice and magnanimity. Anthologies incorporate verses from epic-Purāṇic and literary sources. Since many gnomic and didactic verses are anonymous, they often find fictitious names and pseudonyms for forgotten authors. Satirical verses frequently ridicule depraved human nature and conduct. Erotic and devotional mysticism is sometimes expressed in poems of abiding beauty. Riddles and aphorisms on polity, however, are insignificant as genres but, as in every country, the first is a favourite popular pastime while the second is a necessary manual for administration.

Innumerable authors tried their hands at composing, plagiarizing, collecting and arranging other poets' verses as also from floating oral literature; the resultant bulk is stupendous. And what is truly remarkable is that not all the authors are poetasters, some had a genuine poetic temperament and these have left us a sizeable number of aesthetically finished and emotionally moving poems as also thought-provoking aphorisms, dependable guidelines for social conduct. Indian wisdom is truly impressive not only because of its bulk but because of its width, depth and scope of human experience. It has an authentic claim to immortality.

The bulk of this literature was produced by and for a parasitic section of society in an age of social decadence. Most authors lacked genuine poetic inspiration, yet had the poetasters' aspiration to turn out clever (sometimes not so clever) verses on all conceivable subjects under the sun. Thus grew up a vast literature with a very limited *raison d'être,* except for occasional sparkling stanzas of real beauty, wisdom and authentic experiences of life which redeems much of the deplorable mediocrity of the rest.

References

1. 127 in S.K. De's edition of which De regards only 72 as authentically Amaru's.
2. Or Bilvamaṅgala.
3. Presumably a pseudonym.

4. As also did Hāla in his Prākṛit *Gāhāsatsaī* and Biharilal in his *Satsaī*.
5. Possibly completed in the eleventh century.
6. *Subhāṣita, Gnomic and Didactic Literature*, Part of Vol. IV, Pt. I of *A History of Indian Literature*, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1974, p. 3.
7. Published by D.D. Krishnamurthy in 1968.
8. This is the same Jagannātha who wrote the famous *Rasagaṅgadhara* on poetics.
9. Of 1478 verses by 935 anonymous poets!
10. 1953 moral maxims by 101 authors.
11. 301 descriptive verses.
12. Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
13. Mid-eighteenth century.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Which Otto Böhtlingk brought out in 1927.
16. Or Vedāntācārya or Veṅkaṭanatha Deśika.
17. Or Nāganātha.
18. Sutta.
19. Or Kauṭilya or Mallanāga.

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12

Give and Take: Sanskrit Poetry in Context

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To say that classical authors, such as Plato and Lao-tzu, Voltaire and Goethe, Shakespeare and Hafiz thought and wrote in their respective mother-tongues, would hardly cause a sensation. Yet when we look at India, the situation has been very different and much more complicated. No doubt it is legitimate to state that Sanskrit, the 'classical' language of India, has had an unbroken history of over three thousand years, and that for a considerable period in that history it has been the major means of cultural expression. But such a statement has to be seen in the wider context of an extraordinary phenomenon: for over more than the last two millennia, Sanskrit has been nobody's mother-tongue! It is clear both from inscriptions and from the religious literature of the Buddhists and the Jainas, that by the third or fourth century BCE, people in northern India were actually speaking different languages, the Prākṛts (which include Pāli and Mahārāṣṭrī), which relate to Sanskrit in a manner similar to that of Italian or Spanish to Latin. In addition, from almost the same date onwards, begins the documentation in southern India of the Dravidian languages (Tamil, etc.) which bear no historical relation with Sanskrit. (Moreover, the early centuries of the second millennium CE witnessed the emergence of many of the 'modern' Indian languages, such as Marathi, Bengali

and Hindi, but these languages lie outside the scope of the present study.) All this means that for more than two millennia, Sanskrit was a language that had to be learned and studied (and that only by a relatively small percentage of the total population of India) and thus functioned *parallel* to a person's mother-tongue.

The Indian drama preserves this situation in a stylized manner: a variety of Prākṛts are spoken by different characters and Sanskrit is used by only a small number of, socially elevated, characters. But the second extraordinary feature of Sanskrit is the fact that, from an even later date (second century CE) onwards, it developed into the pan-Indian language of learning that was cultivated not only by the representatives of the Brāhmaṇical traditions, but also by other groups, such as the Jainas and Buddhists. Apabhraṃśa, another 'dead' language of literature, that derived from a Prākṛt, never succeeded in challenging or replacing Sanskrit in that role and flourished for less than half a millennium (till, say the fourteenth or fifteenth CE). All this means that we are dealing here with a dynamic relationship between a pan-Indian 'dead' language of learning and culture whose name itself alludes to *saṃskṛti*, 'culture'—and an increasing number of different, spoken mother-tongues which often developed their own distinctive cultural and literary identity alongside Sanskrit. This dynamic interaction could be regarded as a unique feature of classical Indian civilization.

This situation allows for a variety of questions to be asked: how was the distinctive nature of Sanskrit perceived, in what sense did it act as a model for the other languages, and to what extent was it able to remain 'alive' by developing and enriching itself and by having recourse to new areas of observation? The present explorations, which restrict themselves to poetry (an area least likely to be associated with a 'dead' language), aim at tracing some of the parameters of possible answers to such questions.

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The religion of ordinary people has been strongly influenced by the belief in *devīs*, female divinities who play an important role in preserving or restoring health, prosperity, and happiness. Ambivalent in their own nature, they can nevertheless be induced, through gifts and sacrifices, including those of animals, to provide those desirable aspects of life. Such ideas are also expressed

through mythical narrative, of which the *Devī-māhātmya*, the 'Glories of Devī', in simple Sanskrit, is one of the best known early examples. In the central episode, Devī had manifested herself to fight a demon who had taken on the appearance of a mighty buffalo. Bound by her noose, he changed into a lion (whose head she cut off), then a warrior (whom her arrows cut to pieces), then an elephant (at whom she slashed with her sword), and finally changed back into a buffalo. Drinking a generous amount of alcohol, Devī ridiculed him, her eyes all red and her cheeks flushed, and then jumped on to him, forcing her spear into him time and again. As his true form was emerging from the buffalo body, she cut off his head with her sword: cosmic harmony was restored and human prosperity once again made possible.[1] This episode, with its references to alcohol, blood, and violence, and its rather rough depiction of femininity, is typical of the whole text and of the mythical narratives generally associated with *devīs*. But let us explore what the Sanskrit poet can do with this raw material and how his skill can add cultured sophistication to it. Surprisingly perhaps, this allows us to trace the process of 'deification' of the Sanskrit language itself.

The first example comes from Bāṇa (*c.* 600 CE); he is focusing on the same episode, on the moment when Devī kills the buffalo-demon. (A hundred such poems are found in his *Caṇḍi-śatakam*.)

huṃkāre nyak-kṛtôdanvati mahati jite śiñjitair nūpurasya
śliṣyac-chṛṅga-kṣate 'pi kṣarad-asṛji nijâlaktaka-bhrānti-bhāji ।
skandhe Vindhyâdri-buddhyā nikaṣati mahiṣasyâhito 'sūn ahārṣīd
ajñānād eva yasyāś caraṇa iti śivaṃ sā Śivā vaḥ karotu ॥2॥

'May the goddess Śivā bring about your prosperity,
whose foot, placed on the buffalo's twitching shoulder,
took away his life, being quite oblivious [to what it was doing].
For [the buffalo's] bellowing, [previously] so loud
that it put the ocean to shame, was drowned out
by the tinkling of her anklet;
also the blood flowing from the scratch that his horn had made
as [writhing in pain] it had come in contact with it,
was mistaken for her own lac;
and [his twitching body itself] was wrongly thought
to be the Vindhya mountains.'

Here now Devī has acquired dignity and elegance: poetic hyperbole makes it look as if the killing of the buffalo demon has been no more than an unintentional act, the accidental result of a beautiful woman walking about. On the relative scale the poet imagines, the tinkling of her anklet is louder than the demon's roar, and the wound he is able to inflict does no more than add a bit of red to the lac under her foot. Having her home in the Vindhya mountains (who according to myth had originally wings and wanted to fly, and who even after the wings had been cut off, remain restive), she is also used to the large black and tremulous bulk over which she walks. The blood and gore of popular imagination is transcended by envisaging minute cameos of exquisit beauty and sophisticated manners. The goddess becomes an inhabitant of the landscape of elegant court poetry, and *samskrti* 'culture', has transformed the popular raw material.

But apart from the characterization of the heroine, another factor is at work here, probably more obvious when reading the translation, and that is stylistic complexity. Highly concentrated language makes use of involved figures of speech, such as (in our example) hyperbole, metaphor, artificial causality, the imposition of reason and intentionality on an inanimate object (the foot), and allusion. This style (that was to become codified in great detail by the poeticians) goes hand in hand with the imaginary landscape and its actors, and together they constitute the Sanskrit *kāvya*.

The second example is taken from Ānandavardhana, a Kashmiri poet of the ninth century CE. He too wrote a hundred poems in honour of the Goddess (the *Devīśatakam*). But his interest does not lie in transforming mythical narrative as such; only in one sentence does he refer to 'her who on the battlefield killed the buffalo whom her foot struck down' (v.12).[2] Instead, he endeavours to push the possibilities of the Sanskrit language itself to their limits. In his case it is not so much a question of figures of speech, but of the very raw material of language, its sounds and the mysterious ways in which sound-sequences produce meaning. The following illustration will make it immediately obvious what is meant by this.

yayāyāyāyyayā yūyaṃ yo yo'yaṃ yeyayaiya yām ।
yayuyāyiyayeyāya yaye'yāyāya yāyayuk ।।

'[This Goddess may protect you always!]
It is she who brings you into existence and [then] makes you

reach eternity. Whoever has taken his refuge with her, has been able to obtain salvation by a safe road. She is wisdom, and she grants all prosperity.'[3]

The formal task that the poet set himself is apparent: write a poem, viz., by following the structure of the *śloka* metre, in which all vowels, but only the one consonant *y*, are used. (One might assume that such a constraint would be impossible for any living language, yet as we shall see, this is not necessarily the case.) However, the very idea of manipulating language to such an extent appears to be stimulated by the 'dead' nature of the language, by the fact that every sentence constructed in Sanskrit will be the result of applying hundreds of codified grammatical rules. Thus, instead of asking whether a sentence sounds right, the test will always be whether it can be shown to fulfil all the rules. The present stanza does, just as all the other poems in the *Devīśatakam* do, whatever other formal tasks they set out to fulfil.[4]

No doubt such manipulation of language has a playful character, and yet in the present example, it is far from arbitrary in relation to the theme we are tracing here. The whole work is in praise of Devi, and the present poem, with its concentrated theology, presents her very much as 'God'. But historically more is involved than the transcendentalization of the *devī* concept of popular religion. The latter joins with concepts of 'speech', 'language' — and that means exclusively Sanskrit — and the scriptures of the *Vedas*, and the result of this fusion is presented in the *Devīśatakam* as the hypostatization of Sanskrit, wisdom, and culture in the figure of Devī. Inspired by her, the poet receives the gift to create new, imaginative and linguistic, worlds. Thus in a poem (No. 103), far too complex to translate or analyze here, he offers linguistic raw material which must be analysed in four different ways (yielding four different poems in the process, involving four concrete God-figures). Thereby he illustrates the emanation of 'material' reality from the abstract 'word-principle', the Goddess, its underlying ground. The fact that 'Bhāratī' is one of her names[5] allows for the inevitable association with 'Bhārata', the mythical name for ancient India.

What has this particular line of investigation yielded? Firstly, we have seen how in the hands of the Sanskrit literati elements of popular culture are transformed into figures of elegance,

sophistication and abstract significance. This included the 'deification' of the Sanskrit language itself, as Goddess. Secondly, we have encountered the endeavour to render the Sanskrit language into an increasingly pliable means of expression; this involves the usage of figures of speech, and the imposition of constraints on to its sound. Thirdly, we noticed, more incidentally, the development of a poetic landscape with its stereotyped actors.

Once again all this might suggest that 'dead language' inevitably means remoteness from ordinary reality. The following observations which, by means of a single, representative example, trace another line of development, demonstrate that it was possible for Sanskrit poets to remain in contact with the realities of ordinary life, if they chose to do so. The *kurabaka* tree will guide us along.

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One of the major sources in the development of Indian love poetry were the lyrics composed in the Deccan, from perhaps the second century BCE onwards, in a vernacular language (Mahārāṣṭrī Prākṛt). A substantial amount of these has been collected and handed down in the *Seven-Hundred* (*Sattasaī*) attributed to the anthologist Hāla. In content, they explore the amatory relationships between ordinary people, in concrete and real settings, and in form, they use the *āryā* metre (of vernacular origin) and copy the oblique speech (hints, allusions, *double-entendres)* of a society in which emotions are covered by conventions. A light-hearted note pervades the whole. For instance,

> *ṇohaliaṃ appaṇo kiṃ ṇa maggase maggase kuravaassa* ।
> *eaṃ khu tuha hasai suhaa valia-muha-paṃkaaṃ jāā* ।।6।।

> ' "Why are you so interested in the blossoming of the *kurabaka* tree, but not in your own?" In this way, dear boy, your wife, her face turned sideways, is laughing at you . . .'

According to folklore, the *kurabaka* tree (red amaranth) would flower in spring only when it has been embraced by a young woman. A young and innocent husband was making efforts for this custom to be followed, while his young, and wiser, wife watches him in amusement. It needs the explanation by a witness to the scene to tell the man about the cause of her mirth, but this is done merely by

suggestion, using other meanings of the word *ṇohalia* (translated so far as 'blossoming'). First of all, *ṇohalia* can also mean 'young woman'. So we could translate: 'why do you look for a young woman for the *kurabaka,* but not for yourself?' — which means, why ignore the obvious: your wife standing there? Then *ṇohalia* can also mean 'fresh fruits', and this would seem to imply a reminder of his husbandly duties.

Continuing with the *kurabaka* tree, another stanza tells us:

> *saccaṃ bhaṇāmi vālaa ṇa tthi asakkaṃ vasaṃta-māsassa* ।
> *gaṃdheṇa kuravaāṇaṃ maṇaṃ pi asaittaṇaṃ ṇa gaā* ॥ 219 ॥

> 'I am telling you the truth, my boy. Nothing is impossible for the months of spring! [Even] the fragrance of the *kurabaka* trees has not enticed her to be unfaithful to you, not even a bit . . .'

A young and inexperienced lover appears to have expressed doubt about the faithfulness of his beloved, assuming that nobody can withstand the stirrings of spring with its seductive fragrance of the *kurabaka.* Yet the woman's confidante seeks to put his mind at rest. 'Yes, nothing is impossible for spring — it can even succeed in letting your beloved remain faithful . . .' (The commentaries on the verse, nevertheless, remain unconvinced.)

The influence of this vernacular *āryā* poetry on the development of Sanskrit lyrics was enormous. For example, in the three dramas of Kālidāsa, the *āryā* metre is employed in more than a quarter of all verses. But almost all of them are now in Sanskrit and are spoken by kings; from its rustic origins, the *āryā* poem has moved up and acquired 'refinement' *(saṃskṛti).* Let us consider the following example.

> *voḍhā kurabaka-rajasāṃ kisalaya-puṭa-bheda-śikarânugataḥ* ।
> *animittam utkaṇṭham api janayati malaya-vāto 'yam* ॥[6]

> 'This southern breeze, which carries *kurabaka* pollen and is accompanied by the moisture [issuing] from the unfoldings petals of tender buds, causes a longing that need not have a specific object.'

A universalised and abstract influence of the fragrant *kurabaka* tree on the emotions replaces the specific and overtly erotic associations

expressed in the Prākṛt stanzas; an almost gnomic comment is made, instead of a reproduction of real-life conversation. To a considerable extent, Sanskrit court poetry (*kāvya*) develops along such lines. But not necessarily, as the next example will illustrate.

> *nakha-likhita-stani kurabaka-maya-pṛṣṭhe bhūmi-lulita-virasâṅgi* ||
> *hṛdaya-vidāraṇa-niḥsṛta-Kusumâstra-śarêva harasi manaḥ* ||[7]

> 'You, whose breasts were scratched by finger-nails! You with your back covered with *kurabaka* petals! You whose limbs have lost their lustre from rolling about on the ground! You captivate the mind as if an arrow of Kāma had pierced through your heart and come out (through your back).'

Here now, almost a thousand years after Hāla, we are back in a rural and real landscape, in which the *kurabaka* tree invites secretive dalliance. It is the world of ordinary people of north-eastern India described by Govardhana (*c.* 1200 CE). His recourse to Hāla is explicit: all his poems use the *āryā* metre, and his collection is, once again, called *Seven-Hundred*. Once again snatches of witty conversation, full of double meanings, are reproduced. Yet he writes in Sanskrit, and makes use of much of the arsenal of figures of speech and linguistic manipulation developed by the court-poets, as our example makes clear. As translated so far, the poem tells us something about the appearance of the girl after meeting her lover under the *kurabaka* tree and about the attractive impression this makes on somebody suprising her. Moreover, this attraction is explained by reference to Kāma, the god of Love, who shoots flowers as his arrows from his sugarcane bow into the hearts of people. But something is still missing: a definitive and satisfactory logical connection between the girl and Kāma's arrow, which overtly is stated to have pierced the girl, but not the observer. For this missing link we have to read the whole poem again, but this time with a second meaning.

> You captivate [my] mind, as if you were a (female) arrow of Kāma that has pierced through [my] heart and has come out of it: its front part [sharpened] by scratching it with finger-nails, its back consisting of a *kurabaka* flower, and its juice pressed out from crushing it on the ground.

A compliment is paid: although you look exhausted, you are still very attractive! This is a fine illustration of how all the technicalities of Sanskrit poetry can be utilized to explore facets of concrete, real life.

But Govardhana's background is not only Hāla and Sanskrit court poetry. Some centuries before him, in the same part of India, a very specific and unique genre of Sanskrit poetry flourished which made realism its primary objective. A whole group of poets is involved in this, but we know nothing about them, other than that they lived probably between 800 and 1000 CE and belonged to north-eastern India; D. Ingalls (who has identified the genre) has called them the 'Pāla poets'.[8] Rural life forms the subject-matter, particularly its animals and people, but outside any amorous contexts. Seemingly totally insignificant episodes of everyday life are described in minute detail. But above all, poverty — a most unusual theme in Sanskrit poetry — is dealt with in a most moving manner.

Here are two examples:

> Beckoned by the farmer, the farm-hand pretends not to hear his call. Shivering in the cold and eager to rest for a while longer, he drags himself away from the tree that has sheltered him against the wind, and folding his arms across the chest and hissing through his pouted, trembling and cracked lips, he slinks off to the field, slowly, taking small steps.[9]

Surprising as this choice of topic may be, particularly for a poem in Sanskrit, the total absence of any formal means of poetic ornamentation is equally unusual. The following example illustrates the theme of poverty, but, rare for the genre, with a touch of wry humour.

> "Get up just for a while, my friend, and carry the burden of my poverty! Exhausted as I have been for a long time, let me enjoy your happiness that comes from being dead." Although entreated thus in many ways by the poor man, who had gone to the cremation ground, the corpse remained still, as if he thought that death is greater happiness than being [alive but] poor.[10]

So far we have explored the position of Sanskrit poetry mainly in relation to particular milieux represented by it and the themes described in them, and in relation to stylistic means. Merely accidentally the relationship of Sanskrit to other Indian languages has been touched upon. But this is a topic that deserves further exploration. On the one hand, the vernacular poets become inspired to try and imitate many of the conventions and the stylistic possibilities of Sanskrit poetry. On the other hand, Sanskrit poets may well utilize the opportunities offered by the multi-linguistic situation of Indian society and play their own games with it.

One of the best-known poets of Apabhraṃśa literature is Puṣpadanta who lived in the tenth century CE and wrote in the Deccan. Here is a brief extract from his massive epic which, among many other things, narrates the adventures of prince Vasudeva.

ettahĕ sundaru mahi viharantau / Vijaya-ṇayaru sahasā saṃpattau //
diṭṭhaū ṇandana-vaṇu tahī kēhaū / mahū bhāvai rāmāyaṇu jēhaū //
jahī caranti bhīyara rayaṇīyara / cau-disu ucchalanti lakkhaṇa-sara //
sīya-virahĕ saṃkamai ṇah' antaru / ghōlira-pucchu sa-rāmau vāṇaru /
ṇīlakaṇṭhu ṇaccai rōmanciu / ajjuṇu jahī dōṇeṃ saṃsinciu//
ṇauleṃ so jji ṇirāṇiu sēviu... //
iya sōhai uvavaṇu ṇaṃ Bhārahu / vĕlli-saṃchaṇṇaū ravi-bhā-rahu //[11]

To begin with, the text is easy to translate:

Meanwhile, the handsome prince, walking through the land, speedily reached the town of Victory. There he saw a forest of such a kind that it reminds me of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

(forest)	(*Ramāyaṇa*)
[It was so dense that] inside it birds of the night moved about, and the four quarters reverberated with the sound of cranes.	'In it terrifying ogres [are depicted as] moving about, and the four quarters are filled with Lakṣmaṇa's arrows.
Since it had become warm, the monkeys with their female mates, waving their tails about, jumped across the sky.'	The monkey [Sugrīva], in the company of Rāma, waving his tail about, moves through the sky, in consequence of the abduction of Sītā.

This strange comparison of a forest with an epic forces one to pause: what could its rationale possibly be? The poet explains it himself in

the following two lines, which can either be read about the forest, or, using some of the words in different meanings, about the epic:

(forest)

'in which the creepers covered up the intensity of the sun's rays. In it the peacocks danced, spreading out their feathers, and the *arjuna* trees were sprinkled from vessels (or: clouds); the same [trees] must have been frequented by the mongoose.'

(*Mahābhārata*)

'in which [we hear about] the powerful light of the sun being obscured by the swords [used in the battle]. Where Śikhaṇḍin danced with great thrill, and where Arjuna was covered [with arrows] by Droṇa. Where the same [Arjuna] was affectionately served by Nakula.'

Then the poet adds: 'And in this way that forest resembled the *Mahābhārata*', and once again ambivalent phrases either describe the forest further, or allude to episodes in the second grand Sanskrit epic:

There are a number of ways the poet can produce ambivalent phrases; in the present example, it is achieved by using the same words in different meanings. But this is done in a twofold[12] manner. Some of the ambivalence is also present in the corresponding Sanskrit words (and thus could be reproduced directly in that language). But our passage goes further: it utilizes also words which only in the Apabhraṃśa language sound the same, but correspond to two different Sanskrit words (*e.g. sara*-corresponds to Sanskrit *śara*—, 'arrow', or *svara*-, 'sound').

This is more than a random play with words, or an arbitrary association. The prince enters the forest, at the beginning of his self-imposed exile, just as the heroes of both the great Sanskrit epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata,* spent time in the forests during their own exiles. The hint at the two epics not only elevates the prince to epic status, but also suggests a successful conclusion to his own exile. Although the passage is in Apabhraṃśa, the poetic technique it uses, the comparison it makes, and the linguistic ambivalence exploited for this comparison, all refer back to the Sanskrit language.

The following example wants to illustrate how, under the influence of Sanskrit poetics (and with the help of Sanskrit loan-words), even a living language can achieve the seemingly impossible, viz., a poem that uses but one consonant. (And it may not be too far-fetched to infer a sense of pride, on the part of the poet and his audience, in the powers of their own language.)

tititta tatitu tataitū titattotta tētittittē
tutitta tattatta tutaitūtu tattuttat tottatitat
tutitta tutaittatī tātā tatitatat tōtattatta
tatitta tutittatot tittuttit tattatta tātitittē[13]

'O God [Viṣṇu] who [as Kṛṣṇa] ate the curds that had been hidden and [then] were most appropriate for the proclamation of the message of salvation [viz., the *Bhagavadgītā*]! You grant boons and are [therefore] praised with well-sounding words. You are the transcendental reality, and you recline on the ocean, your mighty chest smudged with the pollen [from Lakṣmī's flower-garland]. Everything receives meaning from you. [As Kṛṣṇa] you danced on the spotted [hoods of the serpent Kāliyā], in the rhythm *'tatitta tutittatu'*. Great fear is overpowering my body that is filled with pain: may your steps kick this fear far away and save me, your dog, who is loyal to you!'

The language used is Tamil, though in a rather literary form: nearly half the words found here are genuine loan-words from Sanskrit that are used more or less commonly in the language. This is not the place to unravel the many allusions in the poem. But attention may be drawn to the fact that form and content are intrinsically connected. The central image is that of Kṛṣṇa 'dancing' on the hoods of the vicious serpent, and the prayer asks for him to repeat this, as it were, by stamping on the poet's fears and pains, to destroy them. From the mnemonic syllables indicating Kṛṣṇa's 'dancing', the prayer receives its very sound, as if the poet were imagining and anticipating how the god will 'dance' on his fears and pains. Similar examples could be quoted from the literature of most other Indian 'living' languages.

The Sanskrit poet too is not oblivious to the existence of many other languages is his society. Ānandavardhana's *Devīśatakam* has some extreme examples of interplay between Sanskrit and other languages. Thus the following *āryā* stanza can be analysed as written in Mahārāṣṭrī Prākṛt and then produces this translation:

maha desu rasaṃ dhamme tama-vasaṃ āsaṃ gamâgamā hara ṇe ||
hara-vahu saraṇam taṃ citta-mohaṃ avasaraü me sahasā ||76a ||

'O wife of Śiva! Grant me delight in what is righteous and take

away from us the cravings that are controlled by darkness (*tamoguṇa*) on account of the coming-and-going (of transmigration). You are my refuge. Let the delusion of my mind vanish speedily.'

Yet by organizing the syllables differently, the same stanza can be read in Sanskrit and yields a different translation:

maha-de sura-sandhaṃ me tam ava samāsaṅgam āgamâharaṇe ।
hara bahu-saraṇam taṃ citta-moham avasara Ume sa-hasā ॥76b॥

'O you who grant greatness ! Protect this my attachment, which is shared by the gods, to the acquisition of sacred scriptures. Umā! Take away, at your pleasure and at the appropriate moment, this delusion of my mind which is so full of adversity.'

Further examples achieve similar ambivalence for other Prākṛt languages and Apabhraṃśa, but the culmination is a stanza which, read in *six* different languages (including Sanskrit, Mahārāṣṭrī and Apabhraṃśa) yields the same meaning:

alola-kamale citta-lalāma-kamalâlaye ।
pāhi caṇḍi mahā-moha-bhaṃga-bhīma-balâmale ॥74॥

'Caṇḍī you faithful goddess of prosperity! You who abide in the lotus of the perfected minds, and you whose terrifying power to destroy [even] extreme delusion never fails, protect [me]!

These have been a few illustrations of how Sanskrit, language and 'goddess', has interacted with other languages of India, how it has enriched itself by drawing on other traditions, how it can transform the rustic and give rise to sophistication and culture, and how it has stimulated other languages to follow its example. All this reveals a process of give and take, a dynamic interaction that has been far from 'dead'.

References

1. Paraphrased from the *Devīmāhātmya*, chapter 3 (*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, chapter 83), vv. 28-44.
2. *Caraṇāghāta-nihata-kāsarā ca raṇājire.*

3. Stanza 22; the sentence in bracket appears in the following v. 23, on which 22 depends syntactically.
4. The *Devīśatakam* includes many poems that can be arranged in visual patterns; most striking among these is the great discus which involves 21 stanzas (vv. 80-100). Certain syllables, read sequentially on the spokes, produce a new stanza (v. 101) in which the poet tells us his own name and that of the work, and informs us that the Goddess inspired him to write it.
5. *Devīśatakam* stanza 63, and quite common in Sanskrit generally.
6. Stanza 9 of Act III of *Mālavikāgnimitra.*
7. Govardhana's *Āryā-Saptaśatī,* v. 324.
8. See his article in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* vol. 74 (1954), pp. 119-31.
9. Quoted anonymously in the *Saduktikarṇāmṛta,* v. 1339, in the section on 'the farmer in winter':

   āhūto hālikenâśrutam iva vacanaṃ tasya kṛtvā kṣaṇaîkaṃ
   tiṣṭhāsuḥ stabdha-romā katham api viṭapaṃ niḥsamīraṃ vihāya ।
   dorbhyām āvṛtya vakṣaḥ-sthalam alasa-gatir dīna-pāda-pracaraḥ
   śītkārôtkampa-bhinna-sphuṭad-adhara-puṭaḥ pāmaraḥ kṣetram eti ॥

10. Quoted in the *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*, v. 2237, in the section on 'the poor householder', and ascribed to Vasukalpa:

   uttiṣṭha kṣaṇa-mātram udvaha sakhe dāridrya-bhāraṃ mama
   śrāntas tāvad ahaṃ cirān maraṇa-jaṃ seve tvadīyaṃ sukhaṃ ।
   ity ukto dhana-varjitena bahudhā gatvā śmaśānaṃ śavo
   dāridryān maraṇaṃ varaṃ sukham iti dhyātvêva tūṣṇīṃ sthitaḥ ॥

11. Puṣpadanta's *Mahāpurāṇam* 83, 8, 1-7 (quoted from L. Alsdorf, *Harivaṃśapurāṇa,* Hamburg, 1936, pp. 22f; I have corrected his *ṇirāriu.*)
12. A third manner is not illustrated in the present example: where the sound-form of a word can either be related to a Sanskrit word or a word found only in the vernacular *(deśī)*: see *ṇohalia* in Hāla's verse No. 6 quoted above.
13. Quoted from *Tiruevvuḷūr-antāti,* v. 38, (in *Antāti-kkottu,* edited by T. Chandrasekharan, Madras, vol. 1, 1956, p. 94); the work is ascribed to a Nārāyaṇa-tāca<u>n</u>, about whom nothing appears to be known.

13

The Contribution of Kashmir to Sanskrit Literature

Ved Kumari Ghai

The Sanskrit literature of India is not a product of any one part of the country. Sanskrit was the link language of the country for centuries and has remained a vehicle of learning for more than three thousand years. The enormous Sanskrit literature which we have now in print or in manuscript form is the result of literary activities in all parts of India, from Kashmir in the north to Kanyakumari in the south. But it is very remarkable to find that this northern corner of the country has produced, in quantity as well as quality, a volume of Sanskrit literature which is simply amazing in its width and depth of knowledge.

Kashmir has contributed extensively to Sanskrit poetry, poetics, grammar, medicine, history and philosophy. All the six schools of Sanskrit poetics, namely, *Alaṁkāra, Rīti, Rasa, Dhvani, Vakrokti* and *Aucitya* originated and developed in Kashmir. The famous commentary *Kāshikā* on Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and the commentaries on Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* were also composed here. It is believed that the great sage Caraka, associated with the *Āyurveda*, hailed from Kashmir and Dṛḍhabala, who revised Caraka's work, was also a Kashmiri. The Cāndra and the Kātantra schools of grammar flourished in Kashmir. As regards philosophical literature, Kashmir's contribution in developing the Pratyabhijñā system of

Śaiva philosophy based on idealistic monism is widely recognised. Kashmir has produced voluminous Sanskrit literature of great merit in the form of *Purāṇas*, historical poems, court epics, devotional poems, anthologies, dramas, works on poetics and dramaturgy, didactic poems, satirical poems, and other miscellaneous works.

Purāṇas

Nīlamata Purāṇa has been referred to by Kalhaṇa as a work of great antiquity. Its date seems to be about sixth century AD. According to Bühler, *Nīlamata*'s great value lies in that it is a mine of information regarding the sacred places of Kashmir and their legends which are required to explain the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, and that it shows how Kalhaṇa used his sources. But the *Nīlamata* also contains a lot of information about the Kashmiri way of life. The life of the common people, the food and drink they took, the amusements they resorted to, the currents of religious thoughts they followed and the rites and ceremonies they performed are described therein. These rites and festivals are mostly similar to those observed in other parts of India. In the field of geography it is interesting to know the similarity of the nomenclature of Kashmir as found in this work with that of other parts of India. The holy confluence of Vitastā and Sindhu is described as *Prayāga*. Names like Sarasvatī, Ṛṣikulyā, Rāmahṛdā, Bhrigutuṅga, Citrakūṭa, Bharatagiri etc. which are names of various *tīrthas* of Kashmir are also names of various *tīrthas* in other parts of India.

Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, which was compiled in the southern part of Kashmir, that is near Jammu, also belongs to the sixth or fifth century AD. It is an encyclopaedic work dealing with various subjects like mythology, cosmogony, cosmology, astronomy and astrology, omens and portents, polity, sociology, religion, medicine, agriculture, animal husbandry, art and architecture. Divided in three *khaṇḍas* and 87 chapters, the work begins with the request of king Vajra, son of Aniruddha and great grandson of Kṛṣṇa, to the sages to narrate the various Vaiṣṇava *dharmas*. They request the sage Mārkaṇḍeya to perform the arduous task. Accordingly, Mārkaṇḍeya narrates the legend of uplifting the earth out of primeval waters by the Boar form of Viṣṇu. There follows the narration of different aspects correlated with the creation of the world, the various cosmic cycles, the creation of gods, demons and human beings. Various Purāṇic stories are also, incorporated. In the

descriptions of Bharata's march against Śailūṣa, the king of Gandharvas, many *tīrtha*s and rivers of this region, namely, Devikā, Candrabhāgā, Vitastā etc. have been eulogised.

The second part deals mainly with polity. The duties of the kings, the queens, the ministers, the army, the judiciary have been discussed in detail. The duties of the public in accordance with four *Varṇa*s, *Āśrama*s and *Puruṣārtha*s have also been described. In the third part, we find details of various types of art, music, dancing, acting, painting, iconography and various types of architecture. One hundred and one varieties of temples have been mentioned. *Haṁsagītā* and *Śaṅkaragītā* also form part of this *Purāṇa*, which is highly important from the point of view of the cultural history of the southern part of Kashmir.

The third *Purāṇa* is *Vāsukipurāṇa* which was compiled in Bhadravāha and describes the religious cults and ethnic moorings of that hilly area. In 501 verses it describes through a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī, various sacred places, rivers and hills of Bhadravāha which is called Bhadrāśrama. The story of Jīmūtavāhana and Śaṅkhacūḍa seems to have been taken from Harṣa's play *Nāgānanda*, hence this work should be dated after seventh century AD. The Nāga cult has been very popular in this area as is clear from the great religious importance given to Vāsukikuṇḍa and various other *tīrtha*s of Vāsukimaṇḍala mentioned in this work. It is interesting to find many rivers of this area named after the Gaṅgā such as Bhāgirathī, Jāhnavī, Mandākinī, Śvetagaṅgā, Kṣīragaṅgā, Atulagaṅgā, etc.

Poetry

The works of many poets referred to by Kalhaṇa in his *Rājataraṅgiṇī* have not survived, but whatever has survived is sufficient to establish that the Sanskrit poets of Kashmir did not limit their poetry within the peripheries of royal courts but also depicted the joys and woes of the common man. In the period of the Karkota king Jayāpiḍa (AD 779-813) there flourished Dāmodaragupta, Manoratha, Śaṅkhadatta, Cataka and Sandhimat. Of these only Dāmodaragupta's work *Kuṭṭanīmata* has come down to us. It is a unique work with a curious mixture of romantic, satiric and didactic elements. Within the main story of a young courtesan seeking advice from an old procuress are woven many interesting stories depicting how luxury and moral laxity had corrupted the rich social stratum of that period.

As far as satiric and didactic poetry is concerned, the earliest work is *Bhallata Śataka* consisting of one hundred and eight verses in the *anyāpadeśa* style. The poet belonged to the times of king Śaṅkaravarman (AD 883-902) son and successor of the benevolent king Avantivarman. Kalhaṇa writes in *Rājataraṅgiṇī* that Śaṅkarvarman had turned out to be a tyrant and levied heavy taxes on the villagers. In his reign, great poets like Bhallaṭa had to live without any means of livelihood while Lavaṭa, who was a mere load bearer, got a rich salary of 2000 *dinārs*. Bhallaṭa gives vent to his feelings of displeasure at this injustice by scolding the wind thus:

> What a wrong behaviour this, O wind! The dust which deserves to be crushed by the feet of the people is being taken by you to the high sky, a place for the group of luminaries. You may not care for obstructions in the sight of the people, but what about the dirt you have put on your own body. How is that to be removed? (v.99).

Hinting at the dark future of the country due to the cruel policies of the tyrant ruler, Bhallaṭa presents an *anyokti* about a hunter and a forest thus:

> This bow is wide like the yawning mouths of Death. The arrows are like the quick poison. His skill excels that of Arjuna, agility is perceptible in every part of the body. Alas! this fowler, a rogue has cruelty at heart and a sweet song on his lips. I think the forest will be bereft of all animals.

Kṣemendra's name comes at the top in the field of satire. A versatile genius, he wrote more than forty works of which only nineteen have survived. Besides providing us with abstracts of *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, Guṇaḍhya's *Bṛhatkathā*, Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* and Baudha *avadānas*, and treatises on rhetorics, erotics and prosody, he has written a large number of didactic and satiric poems dealing with the hard realities of rural and urban life in Kashmir. His *Samayamātṛkā*, modelled on Dāmodaragupta's *Kuṭṭanīmata*, describes the trickeries of a harlot, Kaṅkālī. She relates to a young courtesan, Kalāvatī, her own exploits in younger days when she wandered through the length and breadth of Kashmir and seduced the people

in various guises as a flower girl, sales girl, cake-seller, beggar woman, woman magician and holy saint.

Another work, *Darpadalana*, is a didactic-satiric work denouncing in seven sections vanity arising out of high family, wealth, learning, beauty, valour, charity and penance. Kṣemendra's view is that it is the personal merit of an individual which counts and not the family in which he is born. The wealth of a miser is like the disease of the heart which causes endless misery, while black money is useless as one cannot spend it openly due to fear. That type of learning is worthless which is devoid of good character and which changes justice into injustice and injustice into justice. The poet speaks against the vanity of beauty as it lasts only for a short time and is robbed of charm by old age; and the vanity of valour which is used for killing and not for protection of life. Similarly only that gift is praiseworthy which removes the misery of others and the best kind of penance consists in doing good to others.

Kṣemendra's *Sevyasevakopadeśa* is a shrewed study of the relation between the master and the servant. The poet considers them lucky who have no need to serve the rich. In *Kalāvilāsa*, Kṣemendra describes in ten cantos the various modes of deceit practised by the people. The wicked clerk skilled in crooked writing, the wandering singers and actors adept in snatching money from the people, the quack squeezing money from patients, the crooked astrologer, the tricky goldsmith stealing gold under the very nose of the customer, all are taken from the real life of Kashmir of those days.

In *Deśopadeśa* and *Narmamālā* he depicts in the same style and spirit, the corrupt bureaucracy and evil elements of the society of his times. The misdeeds of officers in the administration are described with outspoken frankness. Kṣemendra does not spare the anti-social types like the hoarder who hoards grain for half a century and prays for famine so that he may sell it at a cut-throat price. Even students who care more for eating than for studies do not escape his attention. He attacks corruption strongly at all levels, from that of a minister to that of a clerk, but he realises like a modern journalist that satire is a far more powerful weapon than sermonising and so seeks to mend affairs by taunting people. His aim is to warn the people against the corruption of the bureaucracy and the roguery of the other anti-social elements. His work *Caturvargasaṁgraha* deals with four ends of life—*Dharma* (virtue), *Artha* (wealth), *Kāma* (love)

and *Mokṣa* (salvation) and the *Nītikalpataru* can be called an encylopaedia of worldly wisdom and polity. The essential qualities of princes, kings, ministers, ambassadors, spies etc. have been described and illustrated with interesting stories. His *Cārucaryā* is also a didactic work of hundred verses.

Similar to *Bhallaṭa Śataka* is another work *Anyoktimuktalatā* of Śambhu who was a court-poet of king Harṣadeva (AD 1089-1101). In one hundred and eight detached verses in varied metres, the poet has presented many soft and hard facts of human life. *Vakroktipañcāśika* of Ratnākara is a collection of fifty verses about the dialogue of Śiva and Pārvatī, each verse illustrating the figure of speech called *vakrokti*. Śilhaṇa's *Śānti Śataka* is a didactic poem divided into four chapters called *Paritāpopaśama, Vivekodaya, Kartavyopadeśa,* and *Brahmaprāpti*. The poem tries to prove the utter worthlessness of worldly pleasures and the great importance of renunciation for attainment of salvation.

Of the court epics of Kashmir, we have *Kapphinābhyudaya* of Śivasvāmin, *Haravijaya* of Ratnākara, *Rāvaṇārjunīya* of Bhīma, *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha and *Kathākautakam* of Śrivara.

Śivasvāmin, the author of *Kapphinābhyudaya*, was a court-poet of Avantivarman. This court epic of 20 cantos deals with the story of the South Indian king Kapphina's war with king Prasenajit of Śrāvastī and the former's conversion to Buddhism. Following the typical style of a *mahākāvya* the poet has embellished the small narratives with descriptions of seasons, mountains, sunrise, sunset, moonlit night, watersports etc.

Ratnākara has given us a stupendous *mahākāvya* of fifty cantos dealing with the defeat of the demon Andhaka by Hara. It seems that the poet wanted to excel Bhāravī and Māgha through his knowledge of rhetorics and polity. About eight cantos deal with Ratnākara's views on polity and ten cantos describe erotic practices like plucking of flowers, sporting in water, drinking and enjoying the sunset etc. *Ravaṇārjunīya* of Bhatta Bhīma is an epic poem of twenty-seven cantos dealing with the war of Kārtavīrya Arjuna with Rāvaṇa. Along with poetic descriptions, the poem provides illustrations for all sections of Pāṇini's grammar. The work can be well compared with Bhaṭṭi's *Rāvaṇavadha*.

Śrīkaṇṭhacarita by Maṅkha of the reign of king Jayasiṁha (AD 1127-56) is based on a Paurāṇic story of the killing of the demon Tripura by Śiva. There are beautiful descriptions of nature in poetic

style. Seeing the sunset and the moon-rise together the poet compares the redness of the sunset with fire, the sky with an earthen stove and the moon with a frying pan which has some black spots. Kāmadeva has created this to make the hearts of the separated lovers boil in the frying pan. The twenty-fifth canto of *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* gives us very important information about the literary circles of those days in Kashmir. The poet refers to a meeting of twenty-seven scholars in various fields of literature, grammar, *Veda*, *Āyurveda* and philosophy who had gathered at the house of his brother Alaṁkāra. Two ambassadors, Tejakaṇtha sent by king Aparāditya of Koṅkaṇa, and Suhala sent by king Govinda Candra of Kannauja, were also present in that literary meet. The majority of scholars mentioned by Maṅkha were from the field of literature. Thus Kalyāṇa, Garga, Govinda, Jalhaṇa, Paṭu, Bhuḍḍa, Yogarāja, Loṣṭadeva, Śrīkaṇṭha, Śrīgarbha, Srīvatsa, Ṣaṭhṭha were men of literature while Janakarāja, Lakṣmīdeva, and Ramyadeva were well versed in the *Vedas*. Ānanda, Jinduka, Trailokya, Nandana, Prakaṭa and Śrīguṇa were scholars of philosophy while Ruyyaka and Nāga had specialised in rhetorics. Manḍaṇa was a scholar. Maṅkha presented his poem before all these scholars for literary criticism and the work got due approval. All this gives us a very pleasant picture of the literary life of ancient Kashmir.

Kathākautaka composed by Śrīvara, who lived during the time of four Sultans of Kashmir, Zainulabdin, Haidarshah, Hasanshah and Muhammad Shah, is based on the story of Yusuf and Zulaikha as narrated by Mullā Jāmi. Zulaikha, a beautiful princess dreams of a young man and falls in love with him. With great difficulty she finds him but he does not give her a proper response. Yusuf is put into prison while Zulaikha is thrown into the ocean of grief. At the end the lovers are united by the grace of Lord Śiva.

Delārāmakathāsāra of Rājānaka Bhaṭṭa Āhlādaka is another Sanskrit *kāvya* based on a Muslim story of the son of a Sultan and a courtesan. Kashmir has also produced some famous epitomes like *Kathāsaritasāgara* of Somadeva and *Kādambarīkathāsāra* of Abhinanda besides the *Mañjarīkāvyas* of Kṣemendra referred to earlier.

Historical Poems

Kashmir ranks the highest as far as historical poems in Sanskrit are concerned. Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* alone is sufficient to challenge

the view that Indian writers were devoid of historical sense. There are, however, other poems with historical themes and also three continuations of *Rājataraṅgiṇī* by Jonarāja, Śrīvara and Prājyabhaṭṭa and his pupil Śuka. Some historical poems like *Somapālavilāsa,* which gave a life history of king Somapāla of Rajouri, *Jayasiṁhābhyudaya* which was based on the history of king Jayasiṁha of Kashmir, and *Bhuvanābhyudaya* of Śaṅkuka which described the battle between Mamma and Utpala of Kashmir are lost to us.

The earliest historical poem available is *Vikramāṅkadevacarita* of Bilhaṇa. Bilhaṇa was born at Khonamuṣa near Pravarapura in Kashmir but, after completing his education, he went out and travelled in various parts of India in quest of fame and fortune. He visited Mathurā, Kānyakubja, Prayāga, Vārāṇasī, Bundelkhand, Dhārā, Anhilwad, and finally settled at Kalyān where he wrote his *kāvya* describing the exploits of his patron, king Tribhuvanamalla Vikramāditya VI. Composed in eighteen cantos, the poem describes the history of the Cālukya dynasty of Kalyān from its mythical origin up to the reign of Vikramāditya VI. Vikrama's marriage with the Śilahāra princess Candralekhā and the love sports of the couple occupy more than seven cantos which indicates that Bilhaṇa was interested more in poetical descriptions than in giving historical accounts. The historicity of many events of Vikramāditya's time are also borne out by epigraphical evidence. Another historical *kāvya, Rājendrakarṇapūra* by Śambhu, is just a panegyric eulogising the conquests of his patron, king Harṣa. It is a small poem of seventy-five verses.

Pṛthvīrājavijaya which is available incomplete from canto first to canto twelfth, gives an authentic genealogy and history of ancestors of Pṛthvīrāja. In the twelfth canot there is mention of a poet Jayānaka who has come from Kashmir to serve in the court of Pṛthvīrāja. It is probable that here the author refers to his own self. The poem is available only up to this point but there must have been some more *sarga*s as the title indicates the victory of Pṛthvīrāja over Ghaurī.

Kalhaṇa's *Rajataraṅgiṇī* is the most important work in Sanskrit which has been planned and executed as history. Though son of Campaka, a faithful minister of king Harṣa of Kashmir (1089-1100), Kalhaṇa was not drawn directly into the whirlpool of the political life of his land and had the good fortune of watching from near the sad and dreary state of his country. With his keen sense of observation, and inherited understanding of political affairs,

appreciable catholicity of mind to respect other religious creeds, and admirable literary gifts, he was justified in his ambition of writing a systematic history of his motherland. He knew the duties and obligations of a true historian as he himself says: "That meritorious poet alone deserves praise whose word like the sentence of a judge keeps away from love or hatred in recording the past".

Kalhaṇa has based the first three cantos of his work on *Purāṇas* and legends and is not precise in giving account of fifty-two kings. From the fourth canto onwards he stands on the solid ground of history with the account of Durlabhavardhana, founder of the Karkoṭa dynasty. The sixth canto gives the history of the Utpala dynasty starting from Avantivarmā, and describes the reign period of ten kings up to queen Diddā. The seventh canto gives account of six kings of Lohara dynasty and the eighth canto gives detailed accounts of Uccala, Sussala, Bhikṣācara and Jayasiṁha as personally observed by the poet. His presentation of contemporary history is precise and commendable. His power of characterisation is marvellous. With a critical eye he has observed the intrigues of the royal courts and described them vividly. As a poet too he must be appreciated for his vivid and graphic imagery. His description of the tragic end of several kings in words of inexpressible pathos makes an indelible impression on the readers' hearts.

The first continuation of *Rājataraṅgiṇī* is by Jonarāja who has picked up the thread where Kalhaṇa left it and has brought the history down to the time of Sultan Zain-ul-abdin. An account of 23 kings has been given in this work. The Hindu rule ended in Kashmir with the imprisonment of queen Koṭādevī by Shamsuddin. Jonarāja praises the fourth Sultan, Shahabuddin, as a good administrator and criticises Sultan Sikandara for his misdeeds. Sultan Zain-ul-abdin has been portrayed as a benevolent king who loved his subjects. The second continuation is *Jain-Rājataraṅgiṇī* by Śrīvara which describes the reign of Zain-ul-abdin, Haidershah, Hasanshah and Muhammad Shah in 2241 verses. Zain-ul-abdin used to listen to the texts of Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and got some Sanskrit works translated into Persian, and Persian works into Sanskrit. The third continuation is *Rājāvalīpatākā* by Prājyabhaṭṭa which is not published and the fourth one is by his student Śuka which covers the period up to AD 1538. All these historical poems are important for the political and cultural history of ancient Kashmir.

Other Poetry

In the field of devotional poems, there are many works of which the well-known are *Devīśataka* of Ānandavardhana, *Stutikusumāñjali* of Jagaddhara containing prayer hymns to Śiva, *Ardhanārīśvara stotra* of Kalhaṇa praising Śiva and Pārvatī together, *Sragdharā stotra* of Sarvajñamitra eulogising the Buddhist goddesss Tārā in 37 verses in the *Sragdharā* metre, *Iśvaraśataka* of Avatāra and *Devīnāmavilāsa* of Sahib Kaul. Many devotional poems are still unpublished. One of these, *Ratnaśataka* by Ratnakaṇṭha beautifully describes the various aspects of the sun god at dawn, midday and dusk.

Anthological literature of Kashmir is also noteworthy. Vallabhadeva's *Subhāṣitāvalī* contains 3527 verses of about 360 poets. Jalhaṇa's *Sūktimuktāvalī* contains 2790 verses of more than 240 authors. Poetry of many writers whose works have been lost has come down to us only through these anthologies.

Drama

Many Sanskrit plays must have been written in Kashmir as the *Nīlamata Purāṇa* prescribes dramatic performance at social and religious functions. Kalhaṇa also refers to the author Candraka who had written some plays to be staged before the public. It is however, sad that only three specimens, namely, *Pādatāḍitaka,* a *bhāṇa* written by Śyāmilaka, *Āgamaḍambara*—a four-act play by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa and *Karṇasundarī*—a *nāṭikā* by Bilhaṇa, have survived. *Pādatāḍitaka* gives a vivid description of the common life of the people in a lively language full of satire. *Āgamaḍambara* is a philosophical play describing various cults popular in Kashmir such as the Vaidikas, Bauddhas, Kṣapaṇakas, Tāntrikas, Śaivas and Cārvākas. Queen Sugandhā, in order to resolve differences among the various cults, arranges an academic conference where the famous scholar Bhaṭṭa Sāhata is nominated as judge. After listening to all the views he solves the problem of apparent contradiction in various *Āgama*s by saying that all these are like different doors to a single house or a single city. The paths may differ but the goal is one and the same, namely, salvation. As there is only one God, he by his own will appears as Buddha and Manu to teach various *Āgama*s. *Karṇasundarī* is a romantic play depicting the love of the Cālukya prince Kaṃadeva and the Vidyādhari Karṇasundarī. It shows the influence of Harṣa's play Ratnāvalī.

Poetics

The contribution of Kashmir is unique in the field of poetics as all the six schools of Indian poetics had their origin in Kashmir. The history of Sanskrit poetics can be divided mainly into three stages. The first stage was of Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* when poetics was considered as a part of dramaturgy; in the second stage the two claimed independent and separate considerations; and in the third dramaturgy came to be considered under poetics. The first stage is represented by Bharata's work only, but as regards the next two stages of the development of this branch of literature, Kashmir's contribution is the largest. The Kashmiri scholar Bhāmaha of early eighth century AD is the earliest after Bharata.

It was Bhāmaha who first of all dealt with the problem of definition of *kāvya* and gave it as *śabdharthau sahitau kāvyam* (togetherness of word and meaning is *Kāvya*). It was he who first of all reduced the number of *guṇas* from ten to three (*mādhurya, oja, prasāda*) and it was he who first of all pointed out the importance of *vakrokti* which was later on used by Kuntaka to found a new school by composing *Vakroktijīvitam*. Udbhaṭṭa of the court of king Jayāpiḍa of Kashmir wrote a commentary on Bhāmaha's work and also in independent work *Alaṅkāra Saṅgraha* which defines 41 types of figures of speech. Udbhaṭṭa's contemporary Vāmana who wrote *Kāvyālaṅkāra Sūtra* is the foremost representative of the school which regarded *rīti* or style as the soul of poetry.

Of Lollaṭa and Śaṅkuka of the time of Ajitāpiḍa no work has survived but we know from quotations that Lollaṭa had opposed the views of Udbhaṭṭa and had written a commentary on Bharata. Śaṅkuka criticized his theory on *rasa*. Both these belonged to the *rasa* school, the former believing in *utpattivāda* and latter in *anumitivāda*.

Avantivarman's reign period brought to light four rhetoricians named Ānandavardhana, Rudraṭa, Mukula and Indurāja. Induraja belonged to the Alaṅkāra school of Bhāmaha. Mukula put forth the theory of importance of *abhidhā* in his *Abhidhāvṛttimātṛkā*. Ānandhavardhana's great work *Dhvanyāloka* is a commentary on certain *kārikās* by him or some predecessor. He regards *dhvani* or suggestion as the soul of poetry. His proposition is that just as the loveliness of a lady is something over and above her limbs, so in the words of great poets we find an exquisite charm which is over and above the words and their meaning and this is *dhvani*.

The theory of *dhvani* was further developed by Ānandavardhana's commentator Abhinavagupta and was brought to perfection by Ācārya Mammaṭa of this very land. The question as to what is the soul of poetry was well discussed and answered by these epoch-makers in the field of poetics. With the establishment of the sense and function of suggestion in poetry which are named *Vyangyārtha* and *Vyañjanā*, these Ācāryas put forth the theory that all good poetry must have a sense implicit in it. *Dhvani* was regarded of three types: suggestion of matter *(vastudhvani)*, suggestion of figure (*alaṅkāra dhvani*), and suggestion of emotional mood (*rasadhvani*). Ānandavardhana and his followers laid special stress on *rasadhvani*. *Rasa* was already mentioned by Bharata, but it was this school which developed a clear-cut system out of it with the theory of *rasa* also being suggested by *dhvani*. The poet can at best directly express the three factors, *vibhāva, anubhāva* and *sañcāribhāva* which bring about the *rasa* but not the *rasa* itself which is inexpressible in its nature. He can only suggest the *rasa* with the help of these factors.

Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, who lived after Ānandhavardhana and before the time of Abhinavagupta, and Mahimabhaṭṭa, who lived after Abhinavagupta and before Mammaṭa, controverted the *dhvani* theory but failed to do so as all the later writers quote them only to refute their theories.

Kuntaka, the founder of a *Vakrokti* school who lived before Mahimabhaṭṭa, has tried to include all ideas of *dhvani* and *rasa* into *vakrokti* which, according to him, is a striking or charming mode of expression. But just like the *anumāna* theory of Mahimabhaṭṭa his *vakrokti* theory also did not receive liberal recognition at the hands of later theorists nearly all of whom since Mammaṭa's time accepted the *dhvani* theory of Ānandavardhana. Kṣemendra also entered this field as propounder of *aucitya*. The idea of propriety was mentioned by Ānandavardhana and some other writers but Kṣemendra developed it to its extreme and regarded *aucitya* as the essence of *rasa*, and as the soul of poetry.

The last great Kashmiri Ācārya in the field of poetics is Mammaṭa. No less than 75 Sanskrit commentaries have been written on his *Kāvyaprakāśa* which is a complete manual of poetics. Thus we find that leaving aside Daṇḍin, Rājaśekhara and Bhojarāja almost all eminent writers in the field of poetics belonged to Kashmir.

Kashmir has produced many Sanskrit works in other fields like philosophy, grammar, lexicography and medical sciences but these are outside the scope of this paper.

14

Some Peripheral Literature: Lexicography and Medicine

Satya Vrat Shastri

It is not only in poetry, drama, fiction and philosophy that Sanskrit literature exhibits its richness: it does so in technical sciences as well. There have been thinkers in India who have contributed substantially to different technical disciplines a brief assessment of two of which is given here.

Lexicography

The oldest works in this discipline are the *Nighaṇṭus*, collections of Vedic terms which have been explained by Yāska in his etymological treatise, the *Nirukta*. These collections differ in many respects from the dictionaries, the *Kośas*, of the later period. The first pertains to the purpose for which the two types of collections were made. In the case of the *Nighaṇṭus*, it was the interpretation of the sacred texts. In the case of the *Kośas*, it was to supply words to poets and writers and to acquaint them with their precise meanings and gender. The second pertains to their being restricted to any particular subject or otherwise. In the case of the *Nighaṇṭus*, they are limited to a particular text, in the case of the *Kośas*, they do not have any such restriction, drawing words as they do from all types of works. The third pertains to their form. While the *Nighaṇṭus* are in prose, the *Kośas* are in verse, mostly in the *anuṣṭubh* and sometimes also in the *āryā* metre.

The purpose of the *Kośas* being written in verse probably was to help in their being committed to memory. The traditional system of Sanskrit education emphasizes at a very early stage itself the storing in memory by the learner of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini and the *Amarakośa* of Amarasiṁha, thus equipping him with vocabulary and grammatical knowledge that are to stand him in good stead in his going over to any discipline. Were he to choose writing for self-expression, the value of both need no emphatic assertion. It was the prime motive of placing sufficient vocabulary at the disposal of a prospective writer that possibly accounts for the attribution of dictionaries to such celebrated writers as Bāṇa, Mayūra, Murāri and Śrī Harṣa, the last of whom is credited with having compiled the lists of words with double meanings: *Śleṣārthapadasaṁgraha.*

The Sanskrit *Kośas*, as available at present, can broadly be divided into two types. There are some which are synonymous, listing words with the same meaning and others which are homonymous, listing words with different meanings (*anekārtha, nānārtha*) though important synonymous dictionaries have a homonymous section also in them. In neither of the two is followed the alphabetical order, that not being felt essential for the fact of the *Kośas* having to be committed to memory any way. That does not mean that the arrangement of the words in them is arbitrary. It follows other principles. The longer articles come first and the shorter ones later. The common final endings or beginnings may decide their grouping. So may the common gender. The words generally appear in the nominative, singly or in a compound as per the exigencies of the metre, as also the meanings, except in homonymous dictionaries where they appear in the locative. Where the gender is specially mentioned, it is in the locative again. Where it is not mentioned, it is indicated by the use of the word in that gender. Some dictionaries have a section on gender at the end. Occasionally the compilers of dictionaries give rather long explanations of words. Normally the meaning is indicated by clubbing an unfamilir word with a familiar one.

Just as in *Vyākaraṇa* Pāṇini has stolen the limelight, so has among lexicographers Amarasiṁha, the compiler of the celebrated *Nāmaliṅgānuśāsana* which is known much more as the *Amarakośa* after his name. There did precede him lexicographers like Kātyāyana, who is credited with the compilation of the *Nāmamālā*, Vācaspati and Vikrmāditya, the compilers of the *Śabdārṇava* and

the *Saṁsārāvarta*, and Vyāḍi whose *Utpalinī* incorporating Buddhist terms is often cited. Traditionally being associated with king Vikramāditya as one of his nine jewels, Amarasiṁha can be assigned to the sixth century AD, though there is no other ground to support this. His work, which is synonymous, is divided into three books or *kāṇḍa*s with an appendix on homonyms, indeclinables and genders and is commented upon widely, the more important of his commentators being Kṣīrasvāmin, Sarvānanda, Rāyamukuṭa and Bhānujidīkṣita. A supplement to it was provided by Puruṣottamadeva under the title *Trikāṇḍaśeṣa*. He also compiled the short independent work, the *Hārāvali*. Perhaps as old as Amara is Śāsvata whose homonymous work, the *Anekārthasamuccaya* devotes sometimes a whole verse or a part thereof to the explanation of a term.

Among other dictionaries could be mentioned the *Abhidhānamālā* of Halāyudha, *c.* AD 950 and the *Vaijayantī* of Yādavaprakāśa, *c.* AD 1050, the latter rather voluminous. There is a good crop of lexical works in the twelfth century AD. The more prominent of these are the *Abhidhānacintāmaṇī*, a dictionary of synonymous words in six sections and the *Anekārthasaṅgraha*, a dictionary of homonymous words in six sections again beginning with one-syllable words and ending with six-syllable ones and the *Nighaṇṭuśeṣa* by the prolific Jain writer Hemacandra. Another Jain compiler Dhanañjaya compiled between AD 1113-1140 his *Nāmamālā*. In AD 1111 Maheśvara compiled his *Viśvaprakāśa* followed a little later by Maṅkha who compiled the *Anekārthakośa* to which he also added a commentary of his own. To AD 1200 belongs Keśavasvāmin's *Nānārthārṇavasaṅkṣepa*. In the fourteenth century Medinīkara wrote his *Anekārthaśabdakośa* which like the *Amarkośa* came to be known after his name as the *Medinīkośa*.

There are certain minor works also in the field of Sanskrit lexicography an account of which may not out of place here. They are *Ekākṣarakośa*, words of one syllable, the *Dvirūpa* or *Trirūpakośa*, words of two or three forms and the dictionaries of certain specific disciplines like, medicine, astronomy and astrology. The Vedic tradition of *Nighaṇṭus* was revived by the Buddhists who produced works such as the *Mahāvyutpatti* for interpreting the Buddhist terms in prose.

In the field of Sanskrit lexicography a rather interesting work is the *Pārasīprakāśa*, a Persian-Sanskrit Dictionary compiled in the

time of Akbar. In 1693 Vedāṅgarāya used the same title for his dictionary of astronomical and astrological terms.

In 972 Dhanapāla compiled for his sister Sundarī Paiyalacchī, a Prākṛt dictionary which was used by Hemacandra for his *Deśīnāmamālā*, a compilation of Deśī words, words which are neither of Sanskrit, *tatsama*, nor derived from it, *tadbhava*.

This brief survey will enable the reader to form a general idea of the large corpus of Sanskrit lexicographical literature which has listed an enormous number of words in their immense variety of meanings. As the Sanskrit language grew with the incorporation of new words, whether of Indian or foreign origin—there are deep imprints of foreign influence in disciplines like astronomy, astrology, medicine and natural and physical sciences—and as meanings underwent change due to natural processes, the need was felt to compile newer and newer dictionaries to incorporate all the new material in addition to retaining the old one. Hence the appearance of a big crop of dictionaries and lexica over the centuries. These dictionaries and the lexica are a standing testimony to the richness of the Sanskrit language and its minute expressiveness.

Medicine

The origin of the science of medicine or *Āyurveda* can be traced in India, like the origin of the many other kinds of sciences, to the *Veda*, particularly the *Atharvaveda* which has hymns in it for curing diseases, *bhaiṣajyāni*, and for increasing the life-span, *āyuṣyaṇi*. There is mention of the twin divine physicians, Aśvinau with wonderful healing powers. In one of the hymns they are said to have supplied a leg to one Viṣpalā: *Viṣpalāyai jaṅghām adattam*, the earliest reference in Sanskrit literature to the transplantation of limbs.

The simple folk in early periods, as the people elsewhere, had nurtured a belief that diseases are the handiwork of demons or evil spirits and that their cure is possible by warding them off by recitation of *mantras* or performance of magic rites. This belief continued long after the period of the *Veda* for we have even in the well-developed treatises on *Āyurveda* a section on treatment of diseases caused by demons.

Tradition recognizes *Āyurveda*, also called *Vaidyaśāstra*, the science of the doctor, as an *upāṅga*, a sub-auxiliary of the *Atharvaveda* which preserves in it the ancients knowledge of embryology and hygiene.

There is a legend in India of the Ocean of Milk having been churned by gods and demons. For medical science the importance of the legend lies in the appearance from the said Ocean, along with others, of Dhanvantari, the mythical physician, typifying the yearning of the ancient Indians for a physician with extraordinary healing powers. Tradition also associates a Dhanvantari with Vikramāditya as one of his nine jewels. Whether the two are identical is open to question.

The *Āyurveda* is called *aṣṭāṅga*, or eight limbs or topics, which are major surgery, minor surgery, healing of disease, children's diseases, toxicology, elixirs and aphrodisiacs. Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya*, in the context of the scope of the use of word, mentions it along with *Purāṇa*, *Itihāsa* and *Vākovākya* thus attesting to its antiquity. It appears that treatises on specific topics called *Tantra*s or *Kalpa*s were composed first. Later comprehensive treatises called *Saṁhitā*s, which dealt with all the eight topics referred to above, made their appearance.

The Sage Ātreya is usually mentioned as the founder of the *Āyurveda*. The Buddhist tradition records the name of one Jivaka, a pupil of Ātreya who specialized in children's diseases. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* and other Buddhist texts show a wide knowledge of elementary medical science, surgical instruments and hot baths, etc.

The earliest of the treatises on medical science in India is the *Caraka Saṁhitā*, the compendium of Caraka, a court physician of Kaniṣka whose wife he helped in a critical case. The work, as it is available now, is not the work of Caraka alone, for it was revised by one Dṛḍhabala who added the last two chapters to it besides contributing seventeen out of twenty-eight or thirty chapters of its Book VI. A native of Kashmir, Dṛḍhabala, ascribed to the eighth century AD, was the son of Kapilabala and apart from carrying out the revision of the *Caraka Saṁhitā* as mentioned above, is credited with the revision of a number of *Tantra*s of Agniveśa, a pupil of Punarvasu Ātreya, a fellow student of Bheḍa or Bhela whose *Saṁhitā* on that score is taken by some to be older than that of Caraka. The *Caraka Saṁhitā* is divided into various sections, called *Sthāna*s each dealing with certain specific topics: the *Sūtrasthāna* with remedies, diet and the duties of a doctor; *Nidānasthāna* with eight chief diseases; *Vimānasthāna* with general pathology and medical studies; *Śarīrasthāna* with anatomy and embryology;

Indriyasthāna with diagnosis and prognosis; *Cikitsāsthāna* with special therapy and the *Kalpa-* and the *Siddhisthāna*s with general therapy.

The next great name in the field of Indian medical science is that of Suśruta, described in the *Mahābhārata* as the son of Viśvāmitra. The famous Nāgārjuna is said to have worked on his text. His fame had spread even beyond the confines of India, to Cambodia in the East and Arabia in the West in the ninth and the tenth centuries AD as evidenced by the literary tradition of those countries. He was commented upon by Jaiyaṭa, Gayadāsa and Cakrapāṇidatta who had also commented upon the *Caraka Saṁhitā* and whose commentary on Suśruta was supplemented by Ḍallaṇa in the thirteenth century AD. One Candraṭa had revised his text on the basis of the commentary of Jaiyaṭa. His work has six sections which, except the last one, the *Uttaratantra*, clearly a later addition, carry the same titles as does the work of Caraka. Its *Sūtrasthāna* deals with general questions, imparting also the information that the author (Suśruta) was the pupil of King Divodāsa of Vārāṇasī who is described as the embodiment of Dhanvantari. The *Nidānasthāna* concerns itself with pathology, *Śarīrasthāna* with anatomy and embryology, the *Cikitsāsthāna* with therapeutics and the *Kalpasthāna* with toxicology.

The next important work is the *Bhelasaṁhitā* which carries the same divisions as does the *Caraka Saṁhitā*. As regards osteology, a third version of the system of Ātreya in addition to those of Caraka and Bhela is found in the *Yājñavalkya* and *Viṣṇu Smṛti*s and the *Viṣṇudharmottara* and the *Agni Purāṇa*s.

Vāgbhaṭa, another great name in Indian medical tradition, is recognised to be posterior to Suśruta. Interestingly, there are two writers of this name, both claiming the same parentage in their works, the *Aṣṭāṅgasaṅgraha* and the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasaṁhitā*. From the fact that one of the two is called Vṛddha Vāgbhaṭa, the Elder Vāgbhaṭa, it would appear that both were different people and it is the commonness of the name that led to the confusion. It is possible that they might have shared the same descent. The Elder Vāgbhaṭa or Vṛddha Vāgbhaṭa was the son of Siṁhagupta and the pupil of the Buddhist Avalokita. The younger Vāgbhaṭa appears to have made use of the work of his elder namesake in a mixture of verse and prose while that of the former is in verse.

Other works on medical science include the *Rugviniścaya* of Mādhavakara, an important text on pathology, the *Siddhiyoga* or

Vṛndamādhava of Vṛnda, a text giving prescriptions for a number of ailments from fever to poisoning, the *Cikitsāsārasaṅgraha* of Cakrapāṇidatta, a text on therapeutics, and the *Cikitsāmṛta* of Malhaṇa, a work on general medicine.

The *Saṁhitā* of Śārṅgadhara is commented upon by Vopadeva, son of the physician Keśava and a protégé of Hemādri (*c.* AD 1300) who also wrote a *Śataślokī*, a work on powders, pills and the use of the pulse in diagnosis.

Numerous other works on medicine came to be written in later centuries, the more noteworthy of them being the *Cikitsākalikā* of Tīṣata (fourteenth century), the *Bhāvprakāśa* of Bhāvamiśra (sixteenth century) and the *Vaidyajīvana* of Lolimbarāja (seventeenth century). There also appeared large numbers of monographs on different diseases including the one on the diseases of plants, the *Vṛksāyurveda* of Surapāla.

Apart from herbs, the *kāṣṭhauṣadhas*, prescribed as medicines, the texts on *Āyurveda* record a number of other preparations with effective curative properties. They are the *bhasmas* of various metals especially of gold and silver. The treatment extended itself even to the use of quick-silver (*parada*) in its various formulations, and sulphur and other acids for treating malignant diseases. The effectiveness of the medication is ensured with its accompaniment, the *anupāna*, milk, butter milk, curd, the decoction (*kvātha*) and so on. The treatment also rests on certain types of diets to be partaken for certain periods, the *kalpas*, to subsist on milk alone or curd alone for twenty-one days or forty days and so on.

The ancient Indians had achieved a high degree of accuracy in diagnosing the ailment by feeling the pulse, a tradition that has come down to the present-day. They had evolved a theory of the three humours, the *Vāta* (wind), *Pitta* (bile) and *Kapha* (phlegm) the disturbance of which is the cause of the disease. Efforts have therefore to be made to keep them on an even keel which can be done by proper health care. *Āyurveda* is the science of good health and not only the curing of diseases.

15

Contemporary Sanskrit Writing

Radha Vallabh Tripathi

Sanskrit has remained a potent vehicle of thought and literary activity through the centuries in India. It continues to be a medium of creative writing and academic pursuits even today. The tendency to present the past in terms of the present and to interpret the present in terms of the past still permeates the new Sanskrit writing. The onslaught of British rule posed new challenges before Sanskrit authors. They tried to interpret the cultural invasion and political turmoil in the light of the value system and ethos which they had imbibed.[1] Creative writing in Sanskrit was immensely influenced by the revolutionary spirit and the struggle for independence in our country during this and the last century.

No doubt, Sanskrit is no longer a language of the masses in India. But it is studied and is being adopted as a medium for writing in each and every part of this vast peninsula. Added to this, the richness of the language, its classical grandeur and familiarity with its idioms, phrases and words have attracted eminent authors in other Indian languages to compose in Sanskrit also. Sri Aurobindo, the author of the great epic *Sāvitrī* in English; Kumaran Asan, one of the greatest of Malayalam poets; Vishranath Satyanarayan, an eminent Telugu author; Nagarjuna and Janakivallabh Shastri, two renowned poets of Hindi—these are only a few names of well-known litterateurs, who also created substantial poetry in Sanskrit.[2]

Continuous publication of periodicals in Sanskrit,[3] including dailies, weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies have helped the authors in this language to reach the people. A research on Sanskrit journalism shows that more than 400 periodicals were brought out in Sanskrit between 1860 to 1960.[4] Some of them, like *Sanskrit Candrikā* (1893) and *Sūnṛtavadinī* (1906) were banned by the British Government, for their support to the freedom movement and staunch opposition of the Raj.

Contemporary creative writing in Sanskrit is marked by diversity, variety in form, diction as well as style, and richness in content. We find many Sanskrit authors writing in the vein of classical Sanskrit poetry. The texture of their compositions unmistakably reveals the overpowering impact of the great poets of yore, like Kālidāsa, Māgha or Śrī Harṣa. Sometimes their poetry appears to be a mere reproduction. And yet, their concern for the contemporary scene and involvement with the present can be detected even when they write on Purāṇic themes. For example, Anandacaraṇa, a traditional paṇḍit of Kashi, composed a *mahākāvya* or epic poem, *Svargārohaṇam*, on the theme of the final journey of the five Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī to the Himalayas. He has captured the trauma and the agony of our age on the great canvas of this poem, Prabhudatta Brahmacārī, again a very traditional scholar, hints upon the idea of democratic republic in his *Gaṇapatisambhava mahākāvya* on the legend of Lord Ganesha.

There is an exuberance of *mahākāvyas* in Sanskrit.[5] A research work on the *mahākāvyas* written during our seventh decade notes 52 published and unpublished *mahākāvyas* composed during 1960-70 alone.[6]

Many of the contemporary Sanskrit poets have turned to new forms. Bhatta Mathuranath (1890-1960) was a pioneer in this respect. He composed ghazals, radio plays, fine essays and also adopted the metres of Brijbhāṣā, *kavitta, savaiyā, sorathā, ghanakṣarī* etc. for his Sanskrit compositions.[7] Jagannath Pathak, Rajendra Mishra, Vindhyeshvari Prasad and many others have successfully experimented with the form of ghazal in Sanskrit. The neo-lyric was found to be more suitable for the spirit of romanticism, individuality and expression of inner conflicts. In the lyrics of Janakivallabh Shastri, Ramanath Pathak, Prabhat Shastri and Rajendra Mishra these tendencies get the upper hand.

We thus find the continuity of the traditional form in contemporary Sanskrit writing as well as an inclination towards new forms and new themes. It was again Bhatta Mathuranath who wrote on the innovations, inventions and new tendencies of his era. Many authors following him wrote on contemporary situations, and revealed their experiences of modern society. Sometimes their reactions are permeated with over-simplification. Enthusiasm to write on the latest themes also mars the quality of the writing.

The Sanskrit poet has thus interpreted the milieu and the tendencies of the age in his own way. The multiplicity of epic poems on mythological or Purāṇic themes indicated his attachment to the past and conformity to tradition. Along with that, a sense of history and contemporaneity has also been introduced in modern Sanskrit literature. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries numerous works on ancient, medieval or modern history have been produced by Sanskrit writers.[8] Most of them are in verse form. An awareness of political situations and democratic rights is particularly reflected in the literature produced after the revolution of 1857. Epic poems like *Angareja Candrikā* (1807), *Rajānglamahodyadyanam* (1894), *Dehalī-mahotsavam* (1902) and *Anglasāmrājya-mahākāvyam* (1916) take into account the British rule in India. Appashastri had written an article "*Cakravartinyāh Ghosaṇāpatram*" in *Sunṛtavādinī* (No. 1.15) on the declaration of reforms by Queen Victoria. Shreeshwar Vidyalankar composed "*Prinsapancaśat*" to felicitate the arrival of the Prince of Wales in India. Bharatendu presented an anthology of Sanskrit poems *Sumanoñjalih* when the Duke of Edinburgh came to Kashi in 1870. Renowned paṇḍits of Kashi had contributed to the selection. Most of the poems of *Sumanoñjalih* were simply verses in praise of the guest of honour, but some of the pieces hinted upon the poverty and the pathetic conditions of the lower middle class. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, there were many poems in praise of the British Raj. The scene however changed as the century drove towards a close. In 1899, Appashastri declined to publish a poem *Viktoriyā-māhātmyam* and then he printed it with a very harsh comment on the poet's devotion to the British rulers (*Sanskrit Candrikā* No. VII.8). With the beginning of the present century, the Sanskrit poets, disenchanted with the Raj turned towards their national heroes. Pandit Shripada Sastri Hasurkar, (1888-1974) a great scholar and a prolific author, composed a series of biographies on them.

K. S. Nagarajan followed his example in *Bhāratīya-deśabhakta Caritam* (1952). Mahamahopadhyaya Ramavatar Sharma wrote *Bhāratīyam Itivṛttam* (History of India) and *Desantariyam Itivṛttam* (History of Other Countries).[9]

The richness and rhetoric of Sanskrit combined with the piquancy of satire and the spirit of alienation has produced very interesting results. Ramavatar Sharma created a parody on Kālidāsa's *Meghadūtam* in his *Mudgardūtam*.[10] The idioms and expressions of the great classic have been remoulded here to bring out a fool's character. *Mudgardūtam* was a trendsetter. Later authors even made the radio, a shoe, a dog or a crow into messengers, replacing the solemnity and intensity of Kālidāsa's poem by humour and a light mood.

During recent decades Sanskrit poets also appear to be influenced by the socialist ideology, awareness of the class-struggle and even Marxist thought. Gandhian philosophy, however has made an everlasting impact on contemporary Sanskrit writing. Gandhi figures as a hero in more than dozen *mahākāvyas* and hundreds of short poems, including *śatakas* and *khaṇḍakāvyas*. *Grāmagītāmṛtam* and *Śramgitā* (1984) by Sridhar Bhaskar Varnekar, composed in a lucid style, present Gandhian philosophy in the *Gītā* form. The spirit of democracy and the struggle of the Indian people are visualised in *Janavijaya mahākāvya* of Paramanand Shastri, and in some of the *Lahari-kāvyas* by the present author (*Janatalaharī* and *Rotikālaharī*. *Lenināmṛtam* (life of Lenin) by Padma Shastri takes the Bolshevik Revolution into account. *Svātantryasambhava-mahākāvya* (1990) of Reva Prasad Dwivedi narrates the history of the freedom struggle.

Essay writing could not attract many authors. Hrishikesh Bhattacharya wrote a few very good essays, expressing 'a loose sally of mind' for the first time in Sanskrit prose. His essays are collected in *Prabandhamañjarī* (1929). Bhatta Mathuranath also contributed several essays to the Sanskrit Ratnakar monthly. The form of travelogue also remains neglected in Sanskrit. Kshama Rao's poem *Vicitrapariṣadyātrā* (1938) is noteworthy for its simplicity and portrayal of experiences of a lady attending a big conference. *Yātrāvilāsah* of Narayan Shastri Kankar describes journeys to various places in India in a very artificial prose. Radio-plays are being written in larger numbers to meet professional demands. *Kṛṣakāṇām Nāgapāśah* (Serpent-noose for the farmers, 1968) by Bhāgirath Prasad Shastri and *Panditarājīyam* (1984) by Ramakant Shukla are good specimens.

Autobiographies are still rare. Korad Ramachandra Kavi (1816-1900) had written a *Svodaya-Kāvya* and very recently Madhusudan Mishra has presented an account of his life and struggles in *Śvetam*.

Bhatta Mathuranath had also made a beginning in writing short stories in Sanskrit on the modern pattern. His short stories follow the craft of O. Henry and some of them can be treated at par with the best stories of contemporary Indian literature. Pandita Kshama Rao published a collection of her 15 short stories in *Kathā Muktāvali* (1915) adopting a highly embellished and poetic prose. She is more at ease in her short stories written in verse form. Kshama Devi wrote on social problems, rural life and inner conflicts. Rajendra Mishra has presented some of the finest subtle pieces in his two collections of short stories *Ikṣugandhā* (1986) and *Rāngḍā* (1992). Ichcha Ram Dwivedi has followed him in *Ekādaśī* (1995).

Pandit Ambikadatta Vyasa had created a *magnum opus* in the field of the Sanskrit novel with *Śivarājavijaya*, a historical romance based on the life of Shivaji. Medhavṛta wove a fascinating tale in his *Kumudinīcandra* (1935). Ramkaran Sharma in *Seema* (1987) and *Raiśah* (1994), Ramji Upadhyaya and Satya Prakash Singh in *Guhāvāsī* (1993) and *Dva Suparna* have interpreted the Indian view of life. Keshav Chandra Dash has brought in existentialist philosophy, dichotomy of modern life and the "Stream of Consciousness" style in his novels. He has a dozen of them to his credit. Shyam Vimal has come out with Sharadacandra-like sensitivity and pathos in his *Vyāmohah* (1991). However, good prose with an accent on realism does not appear to be the forte of contemporary Sanskrit authors. They are better at ease and more eloquent with versification.

Sanskrit drama has continued with a diversity of forms and richness of aesthetic experience. In the last century, hundreds of plays on Purāṇic themes were written. Sundararājakavi however produced a remarkable comedy on Indian family life in *Snuṣāvijaya* (Victory of the Daughter-in-law). In this play, the reign of tyranny unleashed by the mother-in-law is finally overthrown by the perserverance and courage of the daughter-in-law. Some playwrights turned to historical themes. The plays of Shankarlal and Haridas Siddhantavagisha reflect the classical grandeur of our dramatic tradition with an authentic historical perspective. Mahalinga Shastri wrote plays on the epic themes as well as good social comedies. V. Raghavan created some of the finest specimens

of romantic plays. He also visualised philosophical speculations and cultural sensibility. Jatindra Bimal Chaudhury, a prolific writer, wrote as many as 18 plays in Sanskrit. Each of them is focused on the life and deeds of some saint or a national hero. Many of the Sanskrit dramatists are influenced by current trends in modern theatre. Siddheshwar Chattopadhyaya even went to the extent of introducing absurd theatre in his Sanskrit plays. The plays of Virendra Kumar Bhattacharya and Rajendra Mishra are remarkable for their humour, wit, social satire and portrayal of current situations.

Today the scene of contemporary Sanskrit writing is vibrating with immense possibilities of creativity. With the continuity of traditions, it reveals an openness and receptivity for innovations and experimentations. T. G. Mainekar introduced the form of elegy in his touching poem *Smṛtitaraṅgam* (1975). Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya has created sonnets in his Kalāpikā (1972), and Mainekar again adopted the form of sonnet in his romantic poem *Gāyikā-Śilpakāram* (1980). Poems of Keshab Chandra Dash reveal the impact of existential philosophy and dichotomy of modern life with rare imagination and sensitiveness. Harshadev Madhav has adopted the Haiku, Tanka and Cizo and also Baul songs for his poems. The feelings of individuality and alienation have surfaced in *Marīcikā* (1993) collection of poems by Rajendra Nanavati.

References

1. For details see Dr. V. Raghavan's article in *Contemporary Indian Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi.
2. For further details see preface to *Ṣodaśī*—An anthology of contemporary Sanskrit poetry edited by the present author, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1992.
3. The best literary periodicals of Sanskrit published during the past 130 years are: *Kashividyasudhānidhi* or *Pandita* (monthly, 1866-1877) *Vidyodaya* (monthly 1870-1914) *Sanskrit-Candrikā* (monthly 1813-1909) *Vidyarthī* (fortnightly, 1878-1908) *Sahridayā* (monthly, 1895) *Mañjubhāṣiṇi* (weekly, 1906-9) *Sanskritam* (1930) *Mañjuṣā* (*weekly*, 1936) *Mañjuṣā* (monthly, 1935-61) *Bhavitvyam*(1951) *Shāradā* (1959) *Sanskrit Ratnākar* (1904) *Mitra-goshthī* (1904) *Sūryodaya* (monthly, 1925) *Sāgarikā* (quarterly, 1962) *Madhuravāṇī* (1936) *Jyotishmatī* (1936) *Vallarī* (1935) *Mālavamayūrah* (1946) *Sanskrit Pratibhā* (half-yearly, 1959). The literary journals started during the last decade have catered to the need of promoting new Sanskrit writing. They are *Durvā* (Bhopal) *Bhāratodaya* (Purukuttunada, Kerala) and *Sanskrit Mañjarī* (Delhi).
4. *Sanskrit patrakarita kā vikas* (Ph. D. Thesis) by Ramgopal Mishra, Delhi, 1986.

5. Some of the well-known epic-poets of the preceding and the present century and their poems are: Mahesh Chandra Tarka Chudamani (*Bhūdevacaritam*), Haridasa Siddhantavagisha (*Rukminiharaṇam*) Pandita Kshama Rao (Trilogy of epics of freedom struggle and on Gandhi's life) Shridhar Bhaskar Varnekar (*Śivarajyodayam* 1972) Umashankar Tripathi (*Ksatrapaticaritam*) and V. Raghavan (*Muttusvami Caritam*) Risika Vahari Joshi (*Mohabhangam*) Puramanand Shastri (*Janavijayam*) Revaprasad Dwivedi (*Sita Caritam* and *Svātantryasambhavam*). Dr. Rahas Vihari Dwivedi has noted 126 *mahākāvyas* composed in Sanskrit after independence. See his article in *Devavanisuvasah* (Commemorative Volume of Ramakant Shukla).
6. *Arvācina Samskṛta Mahākāvyanusīlanam* (in Sanskrit): Rahas Vihari Dwivedi, Sagarika Samiti, Saugar University, Sagar, 1981.
7. Three voluminous collections of his poems were published— *Sāhitya-Vaibhavam* (1938), *Jayapuravaibhavum* (1947) and *Govindavaibhavum* (1957).
8. For details see Rennaissance in Modern Sanskrit Literature by H.L. Shukla, Raipur (1976).
9. Collected in *Prakīrṇa Prabandhāh* Vol. I, Darbhanga, 1956.
10. Collected in the Vol. I. As above.
11. They are collected in *Kathāpañcakam* (Bombay, 1933) and *Grāmajyotih* (Calcutta, 1954).

16

Sanskrit Studies Abroad

Arvind Sharma

The present article consists of two distinct parts. They are not entirely unrelated but sufficiently different to merit indicating their distinct features at the very outset. The first part is essentially a factual survey of Sanskrit studies abroad at present within the limits of our knowledge. The reader familiar with the details is apt to find it tedious and is advised to skip it in favour of part two, although those not familiar with the data might wish to peruse it. Part two consists of a reflection on Sanskrit studies abroad at present from a history of ideas perspective.

I

Ever since the "discovery" of Sanskrit by the West towards the end of the eigthteenth century, its study in the rest of the world has become a part, though a modest one, of the global academic enterprise. This impressionistic survey will attempt to modestly cover this admittedly modest role, about which more detailed information could be obtained from the International Association of Sanskrit Studies by writing to its Secretary General, Professor Siegfried Lienhard, Korsövägen 11, S-18245 Enebyberg, Sweden. (Tel. 08-7583775)

In the United Kingdom this imperial legacy continues to flourish in its universities. At Oxford (Richard Gombrich, Alexis Sanderson

[Tantra], J. Benson [Pāṇinian Grammar]) at Cambridge (Julius Lipner [Viśiṣṭādvaita]); at Edinburgh (J.L. Brockington [Rāmāyaṇa]) and at London, specially at its School of Oriental and African Studies. Learned bodies, such as the Royal Asiatic Society, with their regular publications, provide other fora for the cultivation of Sanskrit. It is difficult to pass over in silence the deep sense of loss in the field, felt not only in the UK but wherever Sanskrit is studied, by the passing away of Professor B.K. Matilal.

In France, the tradition of Sanskrit scholarship, once quintessentially represented by Louis Renou, continues to flourish at the Sorbonne in both its *śramaṇa* and *brāhmaṇa* orientations: both in connection with Jainism (Colete Caillat, Nalini Balbir) and Hinduism (Madeleine Biardeau, Gerard Colas). Other well-known Sanskritists in France include Laksmi Kappani, Katherine Ojha and Kamaleshwar Bhattacharya of I.N.R.S., Paris, while André Padoux's studies in the nature of language are well known. Professor Gérard Fussman of Collège de France must also be mentioned here for his studies in Indian civilization. In Belgium, Louvain continues to be a centre of Sanskrit studies as demonstrated by the works of Winand Callewaert. In the Netherlands a strong general tradition of linguistic studies also manifests its vitality in the study of Sanskrit. The contributions of J.C. Heesterman (Vedic Sacrifice), F.B.J. Kuiper (Indo-European Culture) and others from the Insitute at Leiden are well known. The prolific pen of J. Gonda once kept the University of Utrecht in the limelight, where George Chemparathy and others continue the tradition. In Austria the Institute for Indology at Vienna, associated with Professor Gerhard Oberhammer, engages several dimensions of Sanskrit studies. Germany continues to be a major centre of Sanskrit studies where it is represented at the Universities of Hamburg, Heidelberg, Tübingen, Munich and elsewhere, with a distinctive flavour at each location. Rahul Peter Das at Hamburg provides a useful critical perspective while geographical and cultural studies associated with Sanskrit, pioneered at Heidelberg by Gunther Sontheimer (who passed away a few years ago) provide a foil to the textual studies *per se*, as represented by the *Purāṇa* project supervised by H.V. Stietencron at Tübingen. Hiltrud Rüstau *(Bhagavadgītā)*, Michael Hahn (German Indology), Paul Thieme (Vedic Studies) and Friedrich Wilhelm (Arthaśāstra) have also contributed to Sanskrit studies. The names of Hans Bakker and Herman Kulke should also be mentioned, along

with Dietmar Rothermund although their interests are more contemporary.

In Italy the legacy of G. Tucci and R. Gnoli is maintained by such institutions as the Oriental Institute at Naples, the Indological Institute at Turin, and the Oriental School of the University of Rome, and by such scholars as G.R. Franci at the University of Bologna. Enrica Garzilli, currently at Harvard, continues to write on Kashmir Shaivism and Women in Hinduism. Mention must also be made of Gian Giuseppe Filippi (Indology) and Giuliano Boccali (classical *kāvya*). The regular appearance of *Asiatische Studien* from Bern, Switzerland testifies to the presence of Sanskrit studies in that country, as also in the person of scholars like Dr. Mariola Wüthrich-Sarnowska who studies Polish translations of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Furthermore, in the former Eastern Bloc countries the *Archív Orientálini* from Prague, Czech Republic, includes papers on Sanskrit studies, as also the *Acta Orientalia* which appears from Budapest, Hungary.

Sanskrit studies are also not unknown in the Scandinavian countries. A. Parpola is known for his work on the Indus script and Vedic culture. Chr. Lindtner at Kobenhavns focuses on Buddhism while the Scandinavian Institute for Asian Studies at Copenhagen also actively promotes Sanskrit studies, like the Oriental Society of Finland which publishes the works of local scholars in *Studia Orientalia*.

Notwithstanding the transitional conditions in the former USSR Sanskrit studies continue to flourish both at Moscow and in St. Petersburg. Some portions of the *Ṛgveda* are now available in Russian translation by T. Ya. Elizarenkova while S.D. Serebriany continues to work on the *Gītā* and Natalia Isayeva on Śaṅkara.

The American continent now possesses several centres of Sanskrit learning, the Northern part predictably more than its Central or Southern parts. Nevertheless in South America F. Tola continues to work on Hindu and Buddhist Philosophical material while in Central America, in Mexico, David Lorenzen pursues his studies on Shaivism (and Śaṅkara). The name of Professor Graciela de la Lama is closely associated with Sanskrit studies in Latin America.

In North America, Sanskrit studies continue to flourish in the universities traditionally associated with such studies. In the USA Harvard, Yale, Brown, Columbia, Pennsylvania and Cornell continue to provide opportunities for such studies. At Harvard, Vedic studies

have received increased focus through the work of Michael Witzel and Stephanie W. Jamison, a tradition already in place at Yale under Stanley Insler. David Pingree continues to explore Hindu astronomy and astrology at Brown while the recent appointment of Gary Tubb at Columbia augurs well for the study of Sanskrit *belles-lettres.* The University of Pennsylvania has long been a major centre of Sanskrit studies where currently George Cardona (Pāṇinian Grammar), Wilhelm Halbfass (Philosophy) and Ludo and Rosanne Rocher (Hindu Law), among others, are active in Sanskrit studies. Christopher Minkowski continues his Epic studies at Cornell. At the University of Chicago, apart from Ed Dimock and David Gitomer, Wendy Doniger continues to translate Vedic and classical texts. Sanskrit studies there seem to have recovered from the setback caused by the untimely death of J.A.B. van Buitenen. While the fate of the interrupted translation of the *Mahābhārata* is not entirely clear, Sheldon Pollock has translated sizeable sections of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as part of a larger project under the editorship of Robert Goldman and Sally Sutherland Goldman who teach and research at the University of California at Berkeley, from where P.S. Jaini made his sterling contributions to the field. Sanskrit studies also continue to flourish at the University of Washington at Seattle through the continuing work of Karl H. Potter (Philosophy) and Richard Salomon (Linguistics, Epigraphy). A recent centre of Sanskrit studies has emerged with the formation of the Center of Asian Studies at the University of Texas, Austin with Richard Lariviere and Patrick Olivelle among its members. Stephen H. Phillips also teaches in the Department of Philosophy at the same university.

Apart from these centres of Sanskrit studies, a number of individual scholars have distinguished themselves in Sanskrit studies in North America. Such a listing, howsoever inclusive, can never be exhaustive, and one must begin by apologizing for the names overlooked which should have been included. It seems only appropriate to commence the list with Edwin Gerow (Reed College), editor of the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* and then to go on to include Alf Hiltebeitel of George Washington University (Epic and Indo-European Studies); Madhav M. Deshpande of the University of Michigan (Linguistics); Eliot Deutsch and Lee Segal of the University of Hawaii (Philosophy, Literature); Kennet G. Zysk of State University of New York (Indian Medicine); Francis

Clooney of Boston College (Mīmāṁsā); Frederick Smith of the University of Iowa (Vedic Studies); James L. Fitzgerald of the University of Tennessee (Epic Studies); Bruce M. Sullivan of Northern Arizona University (*Mahābhārata*); Thomas Coburn of the University of St. Lawrence (*Devī Māhātmya*); Cheever Brown (*Purāṇas*) of Trinity University; Guy Beck (Sonic Theology) of Louisiana State University; A. Rambachan (*Advaita*) of St. Olaf College; Walter H. Maurer of the University of Hawaii (*Ṛgveda*); Eric A. Huberman of Vassar College (Classical Studies); Christopher Chapple of Loyola Marymount University (Philosophy); Daniel Sheridan of Loyola University (*Vedānta*) etc. Two Indian women scholars who have distinguished themselves equally in Sanskrit and Tamil are Vasudha Narayanan of the University of Florida and Indira V. Peterson of Mount Holyoke College. V. Narayana Rao and David Knipe, to mention only two, are Sanskrit scholars at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, a major centre of South Asian Studies, with Joseph W. Elder focusing on modern India, and André Wink on the Indo-Islamics while A. L. Herman (Philosophy) and T.W. Organ (Hinduism) may be reckoned as institutions in themselves for their sustained work. Other notable scholars include Brian K. Smith (Vedic Studies) of the University of California, Riverside and Kess Bolle, now retired, of the University of California at Los Angeles, J.B. Carman (*Viśiṣṭādvaita*) at Harvard; while the pioneering efforts of Seshagiri Rao (University of Virginia) in launching an Encyclopedia of Hinduism must be applauded.

Moving closer home to Canada, Sanskrit studies are pursued at several Universities—by Ashok Aklujkar (Grammar) at the University of British Columbia; by Phyllis Granoff (editor, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*), Paul Younger (Tamil and Sanskrit studies), Wades Wheelock and Francis Whillier (Vedic Studies) at McMaster; by Clifford Hospital at Queens University; by Mahesh Mehta at the University of Windsor; by Klaus K. Klostermaier at the University of Manitoba; by R. Singh at the University of Montreal; by Braj Sinha at the University of Saskatchewan; by Leona Anderson at the University of Regina (Campū Literature) and by Richard Hayes, Katherine K. Young and Arvind Sharma at McGill University. Similarly André Couture (Harivaṁśa) at the University of Laval and John Grimes (*Advaita*) at the University of Lethbridge and Roy Amore (Buddhism) at Windsor have distinguished themselves in their respective fields. At Carleton University K.S.A. Chari is

known for his work in aesthetics while S. Subramaniam has earned an international reputation through his dance-dramas.

Sanskrit studies outside India are also pursued in such places as Israel (David Shulman); Australia (Greg Bailey, R. G. Tanner and Purusottama Bilimoria). The National Centre for South Asian Studies (Director: Marika Vicziany) at Melbourne also deserves mention, although its orientation is more modern. Sanskrit studies are also represented in South Africa (Rukmini, Pratap Kumar). Sanskrit studies also continue to flourish in the Far East. Hajime Nakamura (*Vedānta*) and Sangeku Mayeda (Śaṅkara) are well known names in the field; the work of Tsugunari Kubo on New Buddhist Movements is also significant. In China Bangwei Wang (Beijing) and Mme. Geng Yinzeng continue to focus on the accounts of Chinese travellers to India, among whom Xuanzang's request for a verse from the *Ṛgveda* from his colleagues in India remains a memorable episode.

II

What are the intellectual consequences of Sanskrit studies abroad at present? I shall present them through four concepts: (1) "the threshold response"; (2) "deficit of meaning"; (3) "paternaorientalism" and (4) the need for counterfactual scholarship. People of Indian origin, who once had a reputation of never leaving their country, are now found all over the globe, and what is even more significant, in increasing numbers. For a long time it was possible to pursue Sanskrit studies outside India in isolation from Indians. This has already become implausible and will perhaps soon become impossible. At this point it must be recognized that Sanskrit, like English or French (or perhaps any language with deep cultural resonances) is not merely a language, it is the badge of a culture, or even more, a civilization. It was possible in the past, when Sanskrit was being taught outside India, to make such statements about the culture it represents which would not have been acceptable within India and perhaps even make others snicker. But now, with Indians themselves increasingly constituting an element in that universe of discourse itself outside India, this may no longer be possible. In other words, *the response threshold is now at one's door.* The handwriting on the wall is already painfully legible. Some chairs in Sanskrit studies, endowed with the help of overseas Indians, remain unfilled for fear that those who

occupy them will disregard the sentiments of those very people who raised the money, in the name of objectivity in an age when the name of the game is sensitivity. It is not our intention to judge this situation, only to describe it, as it could no longer be overlooked. In fact it is quite visible, for we have seen it. Some solution will have to be found to adjust the sometimes rival claims of 'objectivity' and 'sensitivity'. The demographic pressure is on. Out of USA's approximately 256 million people almost a million now are of Indian origin and, by some estimates, four million have embraced Buddhism.

Inasmuch as Sanskrit studies embody the study of culture, in *one* respect the outsider will always suffer from a "deficit of meaning". For the outsider it is a study *about* a culture; for the insider it is a study *of* a culture: his or her own. One must distinguish here between "sensibility" and "sensitivity". Howsoever refined an outsider's sensibility, it can never *always* match an insider's "sensitivity". Although I use the expression "deficit" of meaning what I imply is that it will either not rise up to or it will exceed the insider's meaning and that excess also implies a deficit of meaning. (In other words, an excess of meaning does not constitute a surplus of meaning in such a context.)

For an insider to any culture at any point in time possesses a sensitivity about it which, by the outsider, even if fleetingly matched, may be lost soon. It will remain elusive even if occasionally it comes within one's grasp — like a precious gem one might say, grasped momentarily only to be lost irretrievably. Given this fact, which applies not just to Sanskrit but to all cross-cultural studies, should not men and women of goodwill get together to prevent this deficit from becoming something permanent, like a feature of the American budget? Is a balanced-budget approach to meaning called for? One may never be able to make both ends meet either in life or logic but could they at least not be kept within striking range of each other — forever?

The term "paternaorientalism" is a combination of paternalism and orientalism. Why this neologism? Is not orientalism by itself enough a la Said? No, because the 'orient' falls into two parts — that part of it which was colonized and that which was not. Asia in general was colonized by the West but Afghanistan, Thailand and Japan more or less escaped the fate. Thus the study of Japan by the West may constitute an example of orientalism, say in the nineteen

thirties, and so would that of India — but as India was colonized by Britain in the case of India it had to be more than orientalism. It was imperial paternalism in the field *combined* with orientalism in theory, which was not the case with Japan. Sanskrit studies have to emerge from the shadow of both. James Mill could say of the Hindu that he excels in all the qualities of a slave in a way he could not of the Japanese. The claim that Sanskrit was a language forged by the brāhmaṇas in imitation of Greek perhaps crosses the border of orientalism over into that of paternalism.

The danger these studies represent is an enhanced form of the dangers of orientalism. To use Paul Ricoeur's phraseology it might leave one with 'sense without reference'. That is to say, the hermeneutical circle is not completed because it stops short at explanation with no bridge to understanding. When will the arch of meaning reach the port and when will it reach London or Bombay — the *home* port? Paternaorientalism has a tendency to swing the global arc to a Western port.

The fourth point raised by Sanskrit studies abroad at present is one of *counterfactual* scholarship. To introduce the concept one must begin by pointing out that in the USA and Canada an attempt was made in the past to put up the children of natives for adoption in white homes with the perhaps noble goal of inducting them among the rank of the civilized. The contrast I wish to set up is between a child growing up with its natural parents and a child growing up with its adoptive parents. In modern times the study of a culture and its major language or languages has largely been conducted by people of that group — so the history and culture which the British boy or girl reads is the work of British scholars. This is the natural growth model. The case of Sanskrit and Indian studies, however, does not fit into this virtually universal and natural scheme. The history and culture which an Indian student studies and learns is the work — its basic framework that is — of Western scholars. This is the adoptive growth model. One does not wish to accuse the West of Indological cradle-snatching or anything like that. Nor might growing up with an adoptive rather than a natural family need be a bad thing — it might even be an improvement, but the question to ask is: what would the history of France written by Britishers read like? Would it not differ in significant ways in perspective and selection of facts than one written by French scholars? The stage is thus set to ask the counterfactual question: what would have

Sanskrit studies abroad looked like if they had originated in India and gone abroad, instead of originating abroad and then being adopted by the Indians? It is almost like making an adoptee of a natural offspring. Has the time come for factual, that is as they are at present, *as well as* counterfactual Sanskrit scholarship?

Conclusion

Both the positive and negative charges which surround Sanskrit studies abroad at present can finally be traced to this electricity: Its historical origins which are tied up with imperialism. It was *for* it and *of* it. I think Westerners need to forget it was "for" it and Indians that it was "of" it. Then a tradition of authentic global Sanskrit studies will emerge to replace merely Sanskrit studies abroad. This will become possible once the four concepts embodying the intellectual consequences of Sanskrit studies abroad are adequately dealt with. Accuracy can never be a substitute for adequacy in humanistic studies.[1]

Endnote

1. I would like to thank Dr. Shrinivas Tilak of Concordia University for his help in preparing this paper.

17

A Treasury of Translations

Excerpts from:

To the Dawn

Of all the lights the lightest, this light has come,
This radiance, conceived in a great dazzle of colour,
Rushing ahead of the imminent rise of the sun;
And night has now given over her place to the Dawn.

She comes up shining, leading a shining calf.
The Dark One has given over her mansions to Dawn,
For they are undying kin and follow each other—
Night and Dawn, exchanging hue for hue.

They are sisters whose endless road is the very same road,
And they take it as surely as if they were guided by gods;
No clashing there, no halting for Night or Dawn,
Unlike, yet lovely, and in their thoughts as one.

Her colours flash out as she leads her exultant dance;
She has opened her gates for us, and opened them wide;
Revealing the world, she shows us how rich we are.
All of the living open their eyes to the Dawn.

Translated from the *Ṛgveda, I. 113*
by Vidya Niwas Misra, Leonard Nathan and
Sachchidananda Vatsyayan

The One Essential

As the one air, entering into this world,
Becomes the form of what it houses in,
The one Essential, housed in all things born,
Also takes that thing's external form.

As the one sun, the single eye of all,
Is not darkened by flaws in things it sees,
The one Essential, housed in all things born,
And past all grief, is not darkened by grief.

The only Lord, housed in all things born,
He who makes from one a swarm of shapes,
The wise who see Him in themselves, His self,
Their joy is joy that lasts, no other joy.

It is this, the Absolute Joy, they think, and can't be said,
How is it otherwise known, if it shines or does not shine?

In Him no sun, no moon, not one star,
No lightning, how much less these common fires.
But when He blazes up, then all must show;
Then everything flares up immense with him.

Translated from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad, II*
by Vidya Niwas Misra, Leonard Nathan and
Sachchidananda Vatsyayan

City in Mourning

Ayodhya, great city, seems
Like the night itself, in the pitch of dark
Where only cats are awake and owls,
Where men and monkeys keep to cover.

It looks like a ruined army, warriors
Fallen everywhere, armour
Broken, elephants fallen, horses
And chariots fallen, banners thrown down.

It looks like the tide at ebb, brushed back
By a calm breeze, utterly quiet,
After its hour of foam and roar,
After its highest lifting wave.

It looks like a weapon shrivelled up,
Blackened by forest fire, a creeper
That in late spring, a mass of flowers,
Had addled all the hovering bees.

It looks like a densely clouded sky,
Cutting off the moon and stars.
The marketplace and shops are all
Shut up, the towns men deep in gloom.

It looks like a drunken party, all
The drinkers departed, having left
Behind their refuse, a carpeting
Of broken cups, voided of wine.

It looks like a young mare, unsaddled,
Standing forlorn and riderless;
Its rider was a daring man
And will not mount the saddle now.

Translated from the *Rāmayaṇa of Vālmīki, II. 106*
by Vidya Niwas Misra, Leonard Nathan and
Sachchidananda Vatsyayan

The Sorrow of Arjuna

Krishna, Krishna,
Now as I look on
These my kinsmen
Arrayed for battle,
My limbs are weakened,
My mouth is parching,
My body trembles,
My hair stands upright,
My skin seems burning,
The bow Gandiva
Slips from my hand,
My brain is whirling
Round and round,
I can stand no longer:
Krishna, I see such
Omens of evil!
What can we hope from
This killing of kinsmen?
What do I want with
Victory, empire,
Or their enjoyment?
O Govinda,
How can I care for
Power or pleasure,
My own life, even,
When all these others,
Teachers, fathers,
Grandfathers, uncles,
Sons and brothers,
Husbands of sisters,
Grandsons and cousins,
For whose sake only
I could enjoy them
Stand here ready
To risk blood and wealth
In war against us?

Knower of all things,
Though they should slay me
How could I harm them?
I cannot wish it:
Never, never,
Not though it won me
The throne of the three worlds;
How much the less for
Earthly lordship!

Translated from the *Bhagavadgītā, I. 28-34*
in the *Mahābhārata*
by Swami Prabhavananda and
Christopher Isherwood

The Vision

Then, O King! the God, so saying,
Stood, to Prithā's Son displaying
All the splendor, wonder, dread
Of His vast Almighty-head.
Out of countless eyes beholding,
Out of countless mouths commanding,
Countless mystic forms enfolding
In one Form: supremely standing
Countless radiant glories wearing,
Countless heavenly weapons bearing,
Crowned with garlands of star-clusters,
Robed in garb of woven lustres,
Breathing from His perfect Presence
Breaths of all delicious essence
Of all sweetest odors; shedding
Blinding brilliance, overspreading—
Boundless, beautiful—all spaces
From His all-regarding faces;
So He showed! If there should rise
Suddenly within the skies
Sunburst of a thousand suns
Flooding earth with rays undeemed of,
Then might be that Holy One's
Majesty and glory dreamed of.

Translated from
the *Bhagavadgitā*, XI. 9-12
in the *Mahābhārata*
by Sir Edwin Arnold

Karṇabhāram

Cast in order of appearance

Producer	*in the Prologue*
A soldier	*of the Kaurava army in the war against the Pandavas*
Karna	*King of Anga, commander of the Kaurava army*
Shalya	*A king and Kaurava commander, charioteer of Karna*
Indra	*King of the gods, partisan of the Pandavas*
Angel	*messenger of Indra*

Other characters mentioned in the play

Duryodhana	*chief of the Kauravas*
Arjuna	*the middle Pandava, rival and eventual slayer of Karna*
Kunti	*mother of the Pandavas, and illegitimately of Karna*
Radha	*Karna's adoptive mother*

Prologue

[*After the benediction, enter the Producer*]

Producer: May He bless you all, that destroyer of demons at whose form, half-man half-lion, the whole world marvelled, even as he pierced the demon king's breast with his sharp adamantine claws. And now, distinguished spectators, I have to announce that—but what is that? There seems to be a sound just as I was about to start. Well, let me see.

[*Voice off-stage*]

Voice: Ho there! Let it be known! Let it be known to His Majesty the lord of Anga....

Producer: Ah, I see. The tumult of battle has commenced and, on the instructions of Duryodhana, a soldier informs Karna about it excitedly, with hands joined in salute.

[Exit]

Act I

[*Enter a Soldier*]

Soldier: Ho there! Let it be known! Let it be known to His Majesty the lord of Anga that the battle is at hand. Exultant princes on their elephants, horses and chariots roar like lions under Arjuna's banner. And, in response, the irresistible elephant-standard of the Kaurava king swiftly moves into the battlefield. (*Moves about and looks*) Ah! There is the king of Anga, attired for battle, emerging from his palace with King Shalya. But what is that shadow on his face, unprecedented in one whose valour is known to all, one who has always been the leader in the festival of war? This wise and powerful warrior seems overtaken by some sadness. It is as if the natural brilliance of the mid-summer sun were to be dimmed by unseasonal clouds. Well, let me go. (*Exit*).

[*Enter Karna, as described, with Shalya*]

Karna: The warriors on whom I aim my arrows have never escaped. I would fulfil the Kauravas' desire if I could meet Arjuna in the battlefield.

King Shalya, drive my chariot towards Arjuna.

Shalya: Very well.

Karna: Why do I feel bereft at this time of battle? I, who am like an angry god of death in combat, smashing enemies in the clash of arms? Is it because I am the firstborn of Kunti, but known as the son of Radha? Is it because Yudhishthira and the other Pandavas are my younger brothers? This day of reckoning has at last arrived. But my skill with weapons seems worthless, and I am also restrained by my mother. O King Shalya, hear the story of my weapons.

Shalya: I am indeed curious to hear this tale.
Karna: In the beginning I had gone to Parashu Rama.
Shalya: And then?
Karna: That sage had destroyed the warrior caste. His hair was the colour of a lightning flash. His battleaxe shone with a halo of light. I saluted him and stood still.
Shalya: And then?
Karna: Then Parashu Rama blessed me. And he asked me: "Who are you, why have you come."
Shalya: And then?
Karna: I said: "Lord, I wish to learn all the skills of weapons."
Shalya: And then?
Karna: Then he replied: "I teach scholars; I do not teach those of the warrior caste."
Shalya: Of course he had an old enmity with the warriors. And then?
Karna: Then I said I am not of the warrior caste; and I began to learn the skills of weapons from him.
Shalya: And then?
Karna: After some time had passed, I once went with the sage to collect fruit and flowers and firewood.
Shalya: And then?
Karna: The sage got tired from wandering in the forest. He reclined in my lap and fell asleep.
Shalya: And then?
Karna: Then by chance the insect called Thundermouth bit me in the thighs. I did not want to disturb my teacher's sleep, so I quietly bore that excruciating pain. But my bleeding wet him also, and he woke up. Recognizing me for what I was, he suddenly flared with anger and cursed that my weapons may fail me in time of need.
Shalya: O that was a dreadful thing to say.
Karna: So, let us test this tale of the weapons. (*Does so*) These weapons seem as if they have lost their force. And so do these horses, with their downcast eyes and desperate, faltering gait. And those rutting elephants with their forest smells seem to ask that we turn back from battle. The drums and bugles of war have also become silent.
Shalya: O this is terrible indeed.
Karna: But enough of despondency, King Shalya. If we die, we attain

heaven. If we win, we obtain fame. Both are worthwhile. War is not worthless.

And these fine Kabul horses, swift, as eagles and ever ready for battle, may they protect me, as I protect them. Long live the holy priests and cows. Long live the virtuous women. Long live the brave soldiers. And long live I, whose moment has come.

Now I am content. I will enter this difficult battle with the Pandavas. Capturing Yudhishthira, famous for his virtues, and felling Arjuna with the force of my excellent arrows, I will make this battlefield as tranquil as a forest when the lion is killed.

King Shalya, let us mount the chariot.

Shalya: Very well. (*Both mount the chariot*).

Karna: King Shalya, drive my chariot towards Arjuna.

[*Voice off-stage*]

Voice: O Karna, give me something big!

Karna: (*Listening*) That is a powerful voice! Its deep tone has suddenly brought these horses of mine to a dead halt. They stand transfixed as if in a picture, ears cocked, necks arched, eyes unblinking. That is not just a priest. He has majesty. Call him. No, no. I will call him myself. This way, sir, this way.

[*Enter Indra in the guise of a priest*]

Indra: O clouds, you may go back together with the sun. (*Approaching Karna*) O Karna, give me something big!

Karna: I am very pleased, sir. Many crowned heads have bowed at my feet. But today I consider myself fortunate to be able to bow at the feet of an Indra among priests. Sir, Karna salutes you.

Indra: (*To himself*) Now, what should I say in return? If I say the customary "May you live long," he will have a long life. If I say nothing, he will consider me a churl. These aside, what shall I do? (*To Karna*) O Karna! May thy fame live long, like the sun, like the moon, like the mountains, like the sea.

Karna: Sir, shouldn't you say "live long?" But this also is befitting. Power flits like the serpent's tongue. Virtue alone is worth striving for. Kings live on through their virtues when they die. What do you want, sir? What should I give?

Indra: Give me something big.

Karna: I will give you something big indeed. Hear what I have, priest. I will give you a thousand cows, young, desirable, with milk like nectar and sturdy calves, with horns trimmed in pure gold.

Indra: A thousand cows? To drink a bit of milk? No, Karna, I don't want them.

Karna: You don't want them? Listen again. I will give you this very moment a thousand Kabul horses, swift as the wind, tested in war, excellent like the sun's own stallions.

Indra: Horses? To ride for a moment? No, Karna, I don't want them.

Karna: You don't want them? Well, listen once more. I will give you a herd of rutting war-elephants, splendid like mountains, with white tusks and voices like thunder.

Indra: Elephants? To ride for a moment? No, Karna, I don't want them.

Karna: You don't want them either? Then I will give you all the gold you can want.

Indra: I'll take it and go. (*Goes some distance*) No, Karna, I don't want it.

Karna: Then I will conquer the earth and give it to you.

Indra: What will I do with the earth?

Karna: Then I will give you the fruit of the holy sacrifice.

Indra: What's the use of the sacrificial fruit?

Karna: Then take my head!

Indra: Heaven protect me!

Karna: Don't be frightened, don't be frightened please, sir. Listen again. I was born with this protective armour. It is a part of my body. It is impenetrable by god or demon. If it pleases you, I will gladly give it to you.

Indra: (*Happily*) Give it! Give it!

Karna: (*To himself*) So this was his purpose. This must be a stratagem of that cunning Krishna. So be it. But I should not think thus. There is no cause for doubt. (*To Indra*) Take it.

Shalya: King of Anga, do not give it, do not give it.

Karna: Do not stop me, King Shalya. Look, in the course of time strong trees fall down and lakes go dry, even knowledge perishes. What remains for ever is the merit of sacrifice and of giving. So, take it. (*Takes off and gives the armour*).

Indra: (*Taking it, to himself*) So, I have it. I have already done what I

had promised before all the gods for Arjuna's victory. Now I will mount my elephant and watch the duel between Karna and Arjuna. (*Exit*).

Shalya: O king of Anga! Your Majesty has been tricked.

Karna: By whom?

Shalya: By Indra.

Karna: No, indeed. Indra has been tricked by me. Because that wearer of the crown and receiver of holy sacrifices, that destroyer of demons and rider of celestial elephants, has now become my debtor.

[*Enter an Angel disguised as a priest*]

Angel: O! Karna, you have been rewarded by Indra who feels remorse at having taken your armour. Take this irresistible weapon called Vimala for slaying any one among the Pandava brothers.

Karna: Shame! I do not accept anything in return for my gift.

Angel: Please accept the request of a priest.

Karna: The request of a priest? I have never refused one. When will I get it?

Angel: Call for it in your mind, and you will have the weapon.

Karna: Very well. I am grateful. You may return, sir.

Angel: Very well. (*Exit*).

Karna: King Shalya, let us mount the chariot.

Shalya: Very well.

[*Both mount the chariot*]

Karna: O what is that sound? It is the blast of a conch-shell, deep as the ocean's roar in the final deluge. Perhaps by Krishna or by Arjuna. Angry at Yudhishthira's defeat, Arjuna will certainly fight at his best today. King Shalya, drive my chariot towards Arjuna.

Shalya: Very well.

Epilogue

May there be prosperity everywhere.
May all difficulties disappear.
May a king with kingly virtues,
Rule us on this land united.

[*Exit all*]

Translation of the
Karṇabhāram of Bhāsa
by A.N.D. Haksar

Shakuntalá

ACT THE FOURTH

Cast in order of appearance

Pupil	*of the hermit Kanwa*
Anasúyá	*companion of Shakuntala*
Priyamvadá	*companion of Shakuntala*
Shakuntalá	*foster daughter of Kanwa*
Women	*of Kanwa's hermitage*
Gautami	*matron of the hermitage*
Kanwa	*the chief hermit*
Śárngarava	*attendant of Kanwa*
Hermits	*of the hermitage*

Mentioned in the Act

Dushyanta	*a king who had earlier visited the hermitage, fallen in love with Shakuntala and married her.*

Scene—The neighborhood of the hermitage

Enter one of Kanwa's pupils, just arisen from his couch at the dawn of day.

Pupil: My master, the venerable Kanwa, who is but lately returned from his pilgrimage, has ordered me to ascertain how the time goes. I have therefore come into the open air to see if it be still dark. [*Walking and looking about*]. Oh! the dawn has already broken.

Lo! in one quarter of the sky, the Moon,
Lord of the herbs and night-expanding flowers,
Sinks towards his bed behind the western hills;
While in the east, preceded by the Dawn,
His blushing charioteer, the glorious Sun
Begins his course, and far into the gloom
Casts the first radiance of his orient beams.
Hail! co-eternal orbs, that rise to set,
And set to rise again; symbols divine
Of man's reverses, life's vicissitudes.
And now,
While the round Moon withdraws his looming disc
Beneath the western sky, the full-blown flower
Of the night-loving lotus sheds her leaves
In sorrow for his loss, bequeathing nought
But the sweet memory of her loveliness
To my bereaved sight: e'en as the bride
Disconsolately mourns her absent lord,
And yields her heart a prey to anxious grief.

Anasúyá [*entering abruptly*]: Little as I know of the ways of the world, I cannot help thinking that King Dushyanta is treating Shakuntalá very improperly.

Pupil: Well, I must let my revered preceptor know that it is time to offer the burnt oblation. [*Exit*]

Anasúyá: I am broad awake, but what shall I do? I have no energy to go about my usual occupations. My hands and feet seem to have lost their power. Well, Love has gained his object; and Love only is to blame for having induced our dear friend, in the innocence of her heart, to confide in such a perfidious man. Possibly, however, the imprecation of Durvasas may be already taking effect. Indeed, I cannot otherwise account for

the King's strange conduct, in allowing so long a time to elapse without even a letter; and that, too, after so many promises and protestations. I cannot think what to do, unless we send him the ring which was to be the token of recognition. But which of these austere hermits could we ask to be the bearer of it? Then, again, Father Kanwa has just returned from his pilgrimage: and how am I to inform him of Shakuntalá's marriage to King Dushyanta, and her expectation of being soon a mother? I never could bring myself to tell him, even if I felt that Shakuntalá had been in fault, which she certainly has not. What is to be done?

Priyamvadá [*entering; joyfully*]: Quick! quick! Anasúyá! come and assist in the joyful preparations for Shakuntalá's departure to her husband's palace.

Anasúyá: My dear girl, what can you mean?

Priyamvadá: Listen, now, and I will tell you all about it. I went just now to Shakuntalá, to inquire whether she had slept comfortably—

Anasúyá: Well, well; go on.

Priyamvadá: She was sitting with her face bowed down to the very ground with shame, when Father Kanwa entered and, embracing her, of his own accord offered her his congratulations. "I give thee joy, my child," he said, "we have had an auspicious omen. The priest who offered the oblation dropped it into the very center of the sacred fire, though thick smoke obstructed his vision. Henceforth thou wilt cease to be an object of compassion. This very day I propose sending thee, under the charge of certain trusty hermits, to the King's palace; and shall deliver thee into the hands of thy husband, as I would commit knowledge to the keeping of a wise and faithful student."

Anasúyá: Who, then, informed the holy Father of what passed in his absence?

Priyamvadá: As he was entering the sanctuary of the consecrated fire, an invisible being chanted a verse in celestial strains.

Anasúyá [*with astonishment*]: Indeed! pray repeat it.

Priyamvadá [*repeats the verse*]:

Glows in thy daughter King Dushyanta's glory,
As in the sacred tree the mystic fire.
Let worlds rejoice to hear the welcome story;
And may the son immortalize the sire.

Anasúyá [*embracing Priyamvadá*]: Oh, my dear Priyamvadá, what delightful news! I am pleased beyond measure; yet when I think that we are to lose our dear Shakuntalá this very day, a feeling of melancholy mingles with my joy.

Priyamvadá: We shall find means of consoling ourselves after her departure. Let the dear creature only be made happy, at any cost.

Anasúyá: Yes, yes, Priyamvadá, it shall be so; and now to prepare our bridal array. I have always looked forward to this occasion, and some time since, I deposited a beautiful garland of Keśara flowers in a cocoa-nut box, and suspended it on a bough of yonder mango-tree. Be good enough to stretch out your hand and take it down, while I compound unguents and perfumes with this consecrated paste and these blades of sacred grass.

Priyamvadá: Very well.

[*Exit Anasūyā. Priyamvadá takes down the flowers*]

A voice [*behind the scenes*]: Gautamī, bid Śárngarava and the others hold themselves in readiness to escort Shakuntalá.

Priyamvadá [*listening*]: Quick, quick, Anasúyá! They are calling the hermits who are to go with Shakuntalá to Hastinápur.

Anasúyá [*re-entering, with the perfumed unguents in her hand*]: Come along then, Priyamvadá; I am ready to go with you.

[*They walk away*]

Priyamvadá [*looking*]: See! there sits Shakuntalá, her locks arranged even at this early hour of the morning. The holy women of the hermitage are congratulating her, and invoking blessings on her head, while they present her with wedding-gifts and offerings of consecrated wild-rice. Let us join them.

[*They approach*]

Shakuntalá is seen seated, with women surrounding her, occupied in the manner described.

First woman [*to Shakuntalá*]: My child, may'st thou receive the title of "Chief-queen," and may thy husband delight to honour thee above all others!

Second woman: My child, may'st thou be the mother of a hero!
Third woman: My child, may'st thou be highly honoured by thy lord!

[*Exeunt all the women, excepting Gautamī, after blessing Śhakuntalá*]

Priyamvadá and *Anasúyá* [*approaching*]: Dear Shakuntalá we are come to assist you at your toilet, and may a blessing attend it!
Shakuntalá: Welcome, dear friends, welcome. Sit down here.
Priyamvadá and Anasúyá [*taking the baskets containing the bridal decorations, and sitting down*]: Now, then, dearest, prepare to let us dress you. We must first rub your limbs with these perfumed unguents.
Shakuntalá: I ought indeed to be grateful for your kind offices, now that I am so soon to be deprived of them. Dear, dear friends, perhaps I shall never be dressed by you again.
[*Bursts into tears*].
Priyamvadá and Anasúyá: Weep not, dearest, tears are out of season on such a happy occasion.

[*They wipe away her tears and begin to dress her*]

Priyamvadá: Alas! these simple flowers and rude ornaments which our hermitage offers in abundance, do not set off your beauty as it deserves.

[*Enter two young Hermits bearing costly presents*]

Both Hermits: Here are ornaments suitable for a queen.

[*The women look at them in astonishment*]

Gautamí: Why, Nárada, my son, whence came these?
First Hermit: You owe them to the devotion of Father Kanwa.
Gautamí: Did he create them by the power of his own mind?
Second Hermit: Certainly not; but you shall hear. The venerable sage ordered us to collect flowers for Shakuntalá from the forest-trees; and we went to the wood for that purpose, when
Straightway depending from a neighboring tree
Appeared a robe of linen tissue, pure

And spotless as a moon-beam—mystic pledge
Of bridal happiness; another tree
Distilled a roseate dye wherewith to stain
The lady's feet; and other branches near
Glistened with rare and costly ornaments.
While, 'midst the leaves, the hands of forest-nymphs,
Vying in beauty with the opening buds,
Presented us with sylvan offerings.

Priyamvadá [*looking at Shakuntalá*]: The wood-nymphs have done you honour, indeed. This favour doubtless signifies that you are soon to be received as a happy wife into your husband's house, and are from this forward to become the partner of his royal fortunes.

[*Śhakuntalá appears confused*]

First Hermit: Come, Gautamī; Father Kanwa has finished his ablutions. Let us go and inform him of the favour we have received from the deities who preside over our trees.

Second Hermit: By all means. [*Exeunt*]

Priyamvadá and *Anasúyá*: Alas! what are we to do? We are unused to such splendid decorations, and are at a loss how to arrange them. Our knowledge of painting must be our guide. We will dispose the ornaments as we have seen them in pictures.

Shakuntalá: Whatever pleases you, dear girls, will please me. I have perfect confidence in your taste.

[*They commence dressing her*]

[*Enter Kanwa, having just finished his ablutions*]

Kanwa: This day my loved one leaves me, and my heart
Is heavy with its grief: the streams of sorrow
Choked at the source, repress my faltering voice.
I have no words to speak; mine eyes are dimmed
By the dark shadows of the thoughts that rise
Within my soul. If such the force of grief
In an old hermit parted from his nursling,
What anguish must the stricken parent feel—
Bereft forever of an only daughter?

[*Advances towards Shakuntala*]

Priyamvadá and Anasúyá: Now, dearest Shakuntalá, we have finished decorating you. You have only to put on the two linen mantles. [*Shakuntalá rises and puts them on*]

Gautamí: Daughter, see, here comes thy foster-father; he is eager to fold thee in his arms; his eyes swim with tears of joy. Hasten to do him reverence.

Shakuntalá [*reverently*]: My father, I salute you.

Kanwa: My daughter,

May'st thou be highly honoured by thy lord,
E'en as Yayáti Śarmishthá adored!
And, as she bore him Puru, so may'st thou
Bring forth a son to whom the world shall bow!

Gautamí: Most venerable father, she accepts your benediction as if she already possessed the boon it confers.

Kanwa: Now come this way, my child, and walk reverently round these sacrificial fires. [*They all walk round*].

Kanwa [*repeats a prayer in the metre of the Rig-veda*]:

Holy flames, that gleam around
Every altar's hallowed ground;
Holy flames, whose frequent food
Is the consecrated wood,
And for whose encircling bed,
Sacred Kuśa-grass is spread;
Holy flames, that waft to heaven
Sweet oblations daily given,
Mortal guilt to purge away;—
Hear, oh hear me, when I pray—
Purify my child this day!

Now then, my daughter, set out on the journey. [*Looking on one side.*] Where are thy attendants, Śárngarava and the others?

Young Hermit [*entering*]: Here we are, most venerable father.

Kanwa: Lead the way for thy sister.

Śárngarava: Come, Shakuntalá, let us proceed.

[*All move away*]

Kanwa: Hear me, ye trees that surround our hermitage!

Shakuntalá ne'er moistened in the stream
Her own parched lips, till she had fondly poured
Its purest water on your thirsty roots;
And oft, when she would fain have decked her hair
With your thick-clustering blossoms, in her love

She robbed you not e'en of a single flower.
Her highest joy was ever to behold
The early glory of your opening buds:
Oh, then, dismiss her with a kind farewell!
This very day she quits her father's home,
To seek the palace of her wedded lord.

[*The note of a Köil is heard*]

Hark! heard'st thou not the answer of the trees,
Our sylvan sisters, warbled in the note
Of the melodious Köil? They dismiss
Their dear Shakuntalá with loving wishes.

Voices [*in the air*]:

Fare thee well, journey pleasantly on amid streams
Where the lotuses bloom, and the sun's glowing beams
Never pierce the deep shade of the wide-spreading trees,
While gently around thee shall sport the cool breeze;
Then light be thy footsteps and easy thy tread,
Beneath thee shall carpets of lilies be spread.
Journey on to thy lord, let thy spirit be gay,
For the smiles of all Nature shall gladden thy way.

[*All listen with astonishment*]

Gautamí: Daughter! the nymphs of the wood, who love thee with the affection of a sister, dismiss thee with kind wishes for thy happiness. Take thou leave of them reverentially.

Shakuntalá [*bowing respectfully and walking on. Aside to her friend*]: Eager as I am, dear Priyamvadá, to see my husband once more, yet my feet refuse to move, now that I am quitting forever the home of my girlhood.

Priyamvadá: You are not the only one, dearest, to feel the bitterness of parting. As the time of separation approaches, the whole grove seems to share your anguish.

In sorrow for thy loss, the herd of deer
Forget to browse; the peacock on the lawn
Ceases its dance; the very trees around us
Shed their pale leaves, like tears, upon the ground.

Shakuntalá [*recollecting herself*]: My father, let me, before I go, bid adieu to my pet jasmine, the Moonlight of the Grove. I love the plant almost as a sister.

Kanwa: Yes, yes, my child, I remember thy sisterly affection for the creeper. Here it is on the right.

Shakuntalá [*approaching the jasmine*]: My beloved jasmine, most brilliant of climbing plants, how sweet it is to see thee cling thus fondly to thy husband, the mango-tree; yet, prithee, turn thy twining arms for a moment in this direction to embrace thy sister; she is going far away, and may never see thee again.

Kanwa: Daughter, the cherished purpose of my heart
Has ever been to wed thee to a spouse
That should be worthy of thee; such a spouse
Hast thou thyself, by thine own merits, won.
To him thou goest, and about his neck
Soon shalt thou cling confidingly, as now
Thy favorite jasmine twines its loving arms
Around the sturdy mango. Leave thou it
To its protector—e'en as I consign
Thee to thy lord, and henceforth from my mind
Banish all anxious thought on thy behalf.
Proceed on thy journey, my child.

Shakuntalá [*to Priyamvadá and Anasúyá*]: To you, my sweet companions, I leave it as a keepsake. Take charge of it when I am gone.

Priyamvadá and Anasúyá [*bursting into tears*]: And to whose charge do you leave us, dearest? Who will care for us when you are gone?

Kanwa: For shame, Anasúyá! dry your tears. Is this the way to cheer your friend at a time when she needs your support and consolation? [*All move on*]

Shakuntalá: My father, see you there my pet deer, grazing close to the hermitage? She expects soon to fawn, and even now the weight of the little one she carries hinders her movements. Do not forget to send me word when she becomes a mother.

Kanwa: I will not forget it.

Shakuntalá [*feeling herself drawn back*]: What can this be fastened to my dress? [*Turns round*]

Kanwa: My daughter,
It is the little fawn, thy foster-child.
Poor helpless orphan! it remembers well
How with a mother's tenderness and love
Thou didst protect it, and with grains of rice
From thine own hand didst daily nourish it;
And, ever and anon, when some sharp thorn
Had pierced its mouth, how gently thou didst tend
The bleeding wound, and pour in healing, balm.

The grateful nursling clings to its protectress,
Mutely imploring leave to follow her.

Shakuntalá: My poor little fawn, dost thou ask to follow an unhappy woman who hesitates not to desert her companions? When thy mother died, soon after thy birth, I supplied her place, and reared thee with my own hand; and now that thy second mother is about to leave thee, who will care for thee? My father, be thou a mother to her. My child, go back, and be a daughter to my father. [*Moves on, weeping*]

Kanwa: Weep not, my daughter, check the gathering tear
That lurks beneath thine eyelid, ere it flow
And weaken thy resolve; be firm and true—
True to thyself and me; the path of life
Will lead o'er hill and plain, o'er rough and smooth,
And all must feel the steepness of the way;
Though rugged be thy course, press boldly on.

Śárngarava: Venerable sire! the sacred precept is—"Accompany thy friend as far as the margin of the first stream." Here then, we are arrived at the border of a lake. It is time for you to give us your final instructions and return.

Kanwa: Be it so; let us tarry for a moment under the shade of this fig-tree [*They do so*]

Kanwa: [*aside*]: I must think of some appropriate message to send to his majesty King Dushyanta. [*Reflects*]

Shakuntalá [*aside to Anasúyá*]: See, see, dear Anasúyá, the poor female Chakraváka-bird, whom cruel fate dooms to nightly separation from her mate, calls to him in mournful notes from the other side of the stream, though he is only hidden from her view by the spreading leaves of the water-lily. Her cry is so piteous that I could almost fancy she was lamenting her hard lot in intelligible words.

Anasúyá: Say not so, dearest.
Fond bird! though sorrow lengthen out her night
Of widowhood, yet with a cry of joy
She hails the morning light that brings her mate
Back to her side. The agony of parting
Would wound us like a sword, but that its edge
Is blunted by the hope of future meeting.

Kanwa: Śárngarava, when you have introduced Shakuntalá into the presence of the King, you must give him this message from me.

Śárngarava: Let me hear it, venerable father.
Kanwa: This is it—

Most puissant prince! we here present before thee
One thou art bound to cherish and receive
As thine own wife; yea, even to enthrone
As thine own queen—worthy of equal love
With thine imperial consorts. So much, Sire,
We claim of thee as justice due to us,
In virtue of our holy character—
In virtue of thine honourable rank—
In virtue of the pure spontaneous love
That secretly grew up' twixt thee and her,
Without consent or privity of us.
We ask no more—the rest we freely leave
To thy just feeling and to destiny.

Śárngarava: A most suitable message. I will take care to deliver it correctly.
Kanwa: And now, my child, a few words of advice for thee. We hermits, though we live secluded from the world, are not ignorant of worldly matters.
Śárngarava: No, indeed. Wise men are conversant with all subjects.
Kanwa: Listen, then, my daughter. When thou reachest thy husband's palace, and art admitted into his family,

Honour thy betters; ever be respectful
To those above thee; and, should others share
Thy husband's love, ne'er yield thyself a prey
To jealousy; but ever be a friend,
A loving friend, to those who rival thee
In his affections. Should thy wedded lord
Treat thee with harshness, thou must never be
Harsh in return, but patient and submissive.
Be to thy menials courteous, and to all
Placed under thee, considerate and kind.
Be never self-indulgent, but avoid
Excess in pleasure; and, when fortune smiles,
Be not puffed up. Thus to thy husband's house
Wilt thou a blessing prove, and not a curse.
What thinks Gautamí of this advice?

Gautamí: An excellent compendium, truly, of every wife's duties! Lay it well to heart, my daughter.

Kanwa: Come, my beloved child, one parting embrace for me and for thy companions, and then we leave thee.

Shakuntalá: My father, must Priyamvadá and Anasúyá really return with you? They are very dear to me.

Kanwa: Yes, my child; they, too, in good time, will be given in marriage to suitable husbands. It would not be proper for them to accompany thee to such a public place. But Gautamí shall be thy companion.

Shakuntalá [*embracing him*]: Removed from thy bosom, my beloved father, like a young tendril of the sandal-tree torn from its home in the western mountains, how shall I be able to support life in a foreign soil?

Kanwa: Daughter, thy fears are groundless:—

Soon shall thy lord prefer thee to the rank
Of his own consort; and unnumbered cares
Befitting his imperial dignity
Shall constantly engross thee Then the bliss
Of bearing him a son—a noble boy,
Bright as the day-star—shall transport thy soul
With new delights, and little shalt thou reck
Of the light sorrow that afflicts thee now
At parting from thy father and thy friends.

[*Shakuntalá throws herself at her foster-father's feet*]

Kanwa: Blessings on thee, my child! May all my hopes of thee be realized!

Shakuntalá [*approaching her friends*]: Come, my two loved companions, embrace me—both of you together.

Priyamvadá and Anasúyá [*embracing her*]: Dear Shakuntalá remember, if the King should by any chance be slow in recognizing you, you have only to show him this ring, on which his own name is engraved.

Shakuntalá: The bare thought of it puts me in a tremor.

Priyamvadá and Anasúyá: There is no real cause for fear, dearest. Excessive affection is too apt to suspect evil where none exists.

Śárngarava: Come, lady, we must hasten on. The sun is rising in the heavens.

Shakuntalá [*looking towards the hermitage*]: Dear father, when shall I ever see this hallowed grove again?

Kanwa: I will tell thee; listen—

When thou hast passed a long and blissful life
As King Dushyanta's queen, and jointly shared
With all the earth his ever-watchful care;
And hast beheld thine own heroic son,
Matchless in arms, united to a spouse
In happy wedlock; when his aged sire,
Thy faithful husband, hath to him resigned
The helm of state; then, weary of the world,
Together with Dushyanta thou shalt seek
The calm seclusion of thy former home:—
There amid holy scenes to be at peace,
Till thy pure spirit gain its last release.

Gautamí: Come, my child, the favorable time for our journey is fast passing. Let thy father return. Venerable Sire, be thou the first to move homewards, or these last words will never end.

Kanwa: Daughter, detain me no longer. My religious duties must not be interrupted.

Shakuntalá [*again embracing her foster-father*]: Beloved father, thy frame is much enfeebled by penitential exercises. Do not, oh! do not, allow thyself to sorrow too much on my account.

Kanwa [*sighing*]: How, O my child, shall my bereavéd heart
Forget its bitterness, when, day by day,
Full in my sight shall grow the tender plants
Reared by thy care, or sprung from hallowed grain
Which thy loved hands have strewn around the door—
A frequent offering to our household gods?
Go, my daughter, and may thy journey be prosperous.

[*Exit Shakuntalá with her escort*]

Priyamvadá and Anasúyá [*gazing after Shakuntalá*]: Alas! alas! she is gone, and now the trees hide our darling from our view.

Kanwa [*sighing*]: Well, Anasúyá, Your sister has departed. Moderate your grief, both of you, and follow me. I go back to the hermitage.

Priyamvadá and Anasúyá: Holy father, the sacred grove will be a desert without Shakuntalá. How can we ever return to it?

Kanwa: It is natural enough that your affection should make you view it in this light. [*Walking pensively on.*] As for me, I am quite surprised at myself. Now that I have fairly dismissed her to her husband's house, my mind is easy: for indeed,

A daughter is a loan—a precious jewel
Lent to a parent till her husband claim her.
And now that to her rightful lord and master
I have delivered her, my burdened soul
Is lightened, and I seem to breathe more freely. [*Exeunt*].

From the translation
of *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* of Kālidāsa
by Sir M. Monier-Williams.

Pen Pictures from the Kāvyas

The Bride

Stepped from her bath, gowned in the whitest silk,
She was ready to be a bride as the land is ready
Just after rain has washed it and, freshened, it bears
A million blossoms of *Kasa* for a raiment of white.

Her lips a little parted, stain on the lower,
Leavings of wine, a smear of red and trembling
To speak of desire, a filling fruit, not quite
In its deepest hue, but splitting with so much sweet.

Putting her bridal ornaments right, she seemed
A young vine just now coming to blossom, seemed
A young night filling its sky with stars, or a river
Of autumn bearing a rush of migrant birds.

The mirror gave back her white silk dress;
But also gave back the foaming shore
Of the milky sea, an exultant tide;
Gave back the autumn full of the moon.

From *Kumārasaṁbhava* of Kālidāsa, *VII*

The Deer Hunt

There! There! That deer lunging away,
Its foreparts stretched ahead, its rear
Drawn in as if to catch its chest;
Its eyes are set as stones, its neck
Is wrenched around — a poignant curve —
Back towards the car that comes on fast.
Its mouth at every gasping breath
Scatters a shower of half-chewed grass
Behind to mark its headlong track.
It moves in long elegant bounds,
And so it leaps more than it runs,
And seems to fly more than it leaps.

From *Abhijñānaśākuntalama* of Kālidāsa, *I. 7*

The Beloved Separated

There you will see her, in the spring time of youth, slender,
her teeth jasmine-buds, her lips ripe bimba-fruit,
slim-waisted, with deep navel
and the tremulous eyes of a startled doe,
moving languidly from the weight of her hips,
her body bowed down a little by her breasts
—Ah! The Creator's master-work among women.

Know her to be my second life,
alone, speaking little,
mourning like a cakravaki
her companion far away.
With the passing of these long days, racked
by intense longing, the young girl
would appear so changed I think,
like a lotus-plant struck by the chilling hoar-frost.

from *Meghadūtam* of Kālidāsa, *II. 22-23*

The Water Sport

The colour washed from their cheeks, the lac from their lips,
Collyrium gone, and still they shone, most lovely,
And seeing them shine, their lovers lucidly knew
That beauty lent the gauds it wore all their beauty.

Swaying lotus matched with glowing face,
Shifting line of foam with swinging necklace,
Bright water with the skin this water rinsed—
The waves strove with their beauty, strove and lost.

Their half-closed eyes send out a long look
To lovers, who hold them trembling, very close;
Their breasts lift in the water; they're breathing deep—
From weariness, or a high tide of desire?

The water, broken by the slow advance
Of breasts, of hips, of thighs, like stately prows
Scampered ahead, in ripples, to the shore—
Crying that the play of goddesses is done.

Its blue stained by sandalwood washed off
And spreading; its surface streaked with tangled garlands,
Its sinking waves a rumpled sheet—with the women gone
The river seemed a beautifully tousled marriage bed.

from *Kirātārjunīyam* of Bhāravī, *VIII*

The Carousal

Netting down shyness with their warm attentions,
Rousing by their desires the girls' desires,
The young men made them forget all shame and drink
Their very love, deeply disguised as wine.

A mirror for the lover's lovely face,
And perfumed with freshly gathered mango-buds,
And sweet, and hummed over by bees, and cool,
The wine left all the seasons satisfied.

The drunken bee hovered, confused between
The wide-eyed faces of these girls who breathed out
The sweet bouquet of wine they drank and the cups
They held figured with lotuses carved like life.

The wine, tasted by the lips of women
So lovely, surely acquired a richer taste,
For though their lovers had tasted the same before,
This was new, more sweet, till now untasted.

From *Śiśupālavadha* of Māgha, *X*

The Storm

The sky, flung with piling clouds worked by the wind
To wild and shifty shapes, seems like frescoed wall;
Now they are herons pairing, now a flight of swans,
Now fish and crocodiles rolled by the sea, now towered castles.

Clouds, dark as wet leaves, have soaked up the sun;
Anthills, collapsed by rain, go down like elephants showered with
 arrows;
Lightning flares like a lamp that someone bears up and down in a
 mansion;
The moonlight was carried off like the wife of a helpless man.

from *Mṛcchakaṭikam* of Śūdraka, *V*

All translated by Vidya Niwas Misra,
Leonard Nathan, and Sachchidananda Vatsyayan,
except the Excerpt from
Meghadūtam which is translated by Chandra Rajan

The Pageant of the Seasons

Summer

The furious sun is ablaze,
One longs for the moon,
The pools of limpid waters
Invite a dip evermore.
The twilight hours are charming
When the day dies down,
And Cupid, churner of the mind, is weary,
This, my love, is the advent of full Summer. *1.1*

Rains

The approaching season of Rain, dear love,
Comes like a king in pride of power,
The rain-laden clouds are its rutting war-elephants;
The lambents flashes of lightning
Serve for its streaming pennons,
And the reverberating thunder
Is the rattle of its battle-drums;
It is hailed by a host of lovers
As the royal cavalcade is acclaimed
By crowds of suppliants. *2.1*

Autumn

Behold! the Lady Autumn comes
Clad in the silver kasa blossoms,
Her fair visage is the white lotus bloom,
The tinkling of the her anklet bells is heard
In the tuneful cry of wild geese on high;
The harvest of rice with ripening sheaves,
Bending in billows in the fresh young breeze,
Is her graceful figure and supple body;
She emulates the charming bride
With white bridal vesture and lily-white face,
The jingling anklets and slender figure,
And the shoulders bowed with decorous modesty
And woman's gentle grace. *3.1*

Early Winter

Behold! the young maid, mirror in hand,
Making up her lotus face
In the sidelong morning sun;
Pouting her mouth she scans her lips
Whose essence was sucked by the lover. *4.13*

Winter

May this winter time
Rich in dainties, sweets and lucent syrups,
Charming with the fields of rice,
And cloying with the juice of the sugarcane,
Warm with love's awakening
and happy fulfilment,
But painful to pining lovers
Tend to your bliss for ever! *5.16*

Spring

The trees aflower are crowned with glory,
The waters are strewn with lotus and lily,
The balmy breeze liberates fragrance,
And maidens are filled with dreams of love;
The languid perfection of the day
Wanes to a quivering twilight,
And all that breathes, or moves, or blossoms
Is sweeter, my love, in Spring. *6.2*

From the *Ritusaṁhāra* of Kalidāsa,
translated by R. S. Pandit

The Epigrams of Bhartṛhari

I

No single plant in this world's garden plot
Bears such sweet fruit, such bitter fruit as she:
Ambrosial are the apples on her tree
When she's in love, and poison when she's not. *91*

If the forest of her hair
Calls you to explore the land,
And her breasts, those mountains fair,
Tempt that mountaineer, your hand—
Stop! before it is too late:
Love, the brigand, lies in wait. *104*

She needeth no instruction in the art
Of using woman's wiles to win man's heart:
The lily's scarlet stamens grew untaught,
The bee came freely, wishing to be caught. *82*

II

Patience, better than armour, guards from harm.
And why seek enemies, if you have anger?
With friends, you need no medicine for danger.
With kinsmen, why ask fire to keep you warm?
What use are snakes when slander sharper stings?
What use is wealth where wisdom brings content?
With modesty, what need for ornament?
With poetry's Muse, why should we envy kings? *237*

Prince, would you milk this bounteous cow, the State?
First, you must let the people drink their share:
Only when calves are fed, will Earth's tree bear
Fruit, like a cornucopia, for your plate. *58*

The ignorant are quickly satisfied,
And argument will soon convince the wise;
But Heaven's own wisdom scarcely will suffice
To contradict a half-baked scholar's pride. *8*

III

For one short act, a child; next act, a boy
In love; then poor; a short act to enjoy
Status and wealth: till in the last act, Man,
Painted with wrinkles, body bent with age,
Ending the comedy which birth began,
Withdraws behind the curtain of life's stage. *235*

She who is always in my thoughts prefers
Another man, and does not think of me.
Yet he seeks for another's love, not hers;
And some poor girl is grieving for my sake.
Why then, the devil take
Both her and him; and love; and her; and me. *311*

Earth, my own mother; father Air; and Fire,
My friend; and Water, well-beloved cousin;
And Ether, brother mine: to all of you
This is my last farewell. I give you thanks
For all the benefits you have conferred
During my sojourn with you. Now my soul
Has won clear, certain knowledge, and returns
To the great absolute from whence it came. *301*

Translated from the
Satakatrayam of Bhartrhari by John Brough

Panchatantra

The Prologue

Salutation to the makers
Of precepts on policy,
To Manu and Vachaspati,
To Shukra and Parashara with his son,
And to Chanakya the wise.

Having well considered
The essence of all the precepts
Vishnu Sharma did contrive
This charming work with chapters five.

Thus has it been said: There is a city called Mahilaropya in the southern country. In it there reigned a king named Amara Shakti. He was like a wish-fulfilling tree to the multitudes of supplicants, and his feet shone with rays of light reflected from the jewelled crowns of other kings he had subdued. He was also an adept in all the sciences; but his three sons, named respectively Vasu Shakti, Ugra Shakti and Aneka Shakti, were supreme dunderheads.

Observing his sons' aversion to learning, the king called his ministers and said: "Gentlemen, it is known to you that these three sons of mine are averse to knowledge and devoid of discrimination. Seeing them thus, even this vast kingdom gives me no pleasure. As has been well said.

Better than a foolish son
Is one deceased or never born,
The pain that gives at least is brief
But the fool gives cause for lifelong grief.

Better abortion or no cohabitation,
Better stillborn or even a daughter,
Better a barren wife, but not a foolish son,
Even if a rich or handsome one.

> What can one do with a cow which gives
> Neither calves nor milk
> What's the point of having a son
> Who's neither devoted nor learned?

"So, a way should be found for enlightening their minds. Here there are five hundred professors who enjoy stipends given by me. Something should be arranged so that my wishes are fulfilled."

"Majesty", said one of the ministers, "it is heard that grammar takes twelve years. Then come Manu and other works on Dharma, Chanakya and those on Artha, and Vatsyayana and others on Kama. Thus are the branches of learning taught. Then comes enlightenment."

Then a minister among them named Sumati spoke: "Temporary is the condition of life. All this learning needs a long time to master. One should think of a summary method for their enlightenment. As has been observed:

> Endless is learning and brief is life,
> There are many obstacles in the way.
> So, grasp the essence and leave the rest
> As with milk and water do swans, they say.

"There is a Brahmin here, by name Vishnu Sharma, adept in all the sciences and famous in student communities. These princes should be entrusted to him. He will enlighten them quickly".

Hearing this, the king summoned Vishnu Sharma and said: "Sir, favour me by doing what is necessary, and quickly make these sons of mine well-versed in the rules of conduct. I will arrange a hundred stipends for you".

Then said Vishnu Sharma to the king: "Majesty, listen to my candid comment. I do not sell learning, even for a hundred stipends. But if I do not make these sons of yours adept in the rules of conduct within six months, my name is not Vishnu Sharma. What is more, listen to my declaration, like a lion's roar. I am not interested in money. I am eighty-year old, turned off from worldly pleasures, and have no need for wealth. But I will sport with the Goddess of Learning to fulfil your request. So write down today's date. If I do not make your sons experts in the rules of conduct within six months, may God not show me the way to heaven."

The king was amazed and delighted on hearing the Brahmin's extraordinary vow. So were his ministers. With great relief and respect, he handed over the princes to the Brahmin. Vishnu Sharma on his part composed for those princes and taught them the five chapters: Splitting Friendship; Making Friends; The Crow and the Owl; The Loss of what was Gained; and Rash Deeds. Having studied them, within six months, they became as he had promised. From that time on the treatise known as the *Panchatantra* has been current on this earth for the enlightenment of the young. What more is there to say:

He who heeds and oft peruses
This work on conduct proven
Never the course of success loses,
Even to the king of heaven.

Translated from *Panchatantra of* Viṣṇu Śarma
by A.N.D. Haksar

Love Poems

The day is surely better than the night?
Or is the night not better than the day?
How can I tell? But this I know is right:
Both are worth nothing when my love's away.

Amaru

I burn with anguish when we are apart,
When he returns, with jealous fear;
And when I see him, he assaults my heart;
I faint when he is near.
No single moment can I capture bliss,
When he is gone, or when he's here.
What in this world can be more strange than this?
And yet, he is my dear.

Amaru

When the pet parrot in the morning starts
To chatter rather much of what he heard
Of last night's talk between the young sweethearts,
The young wife does her best to check the bird,
Embarrassed that the older folk should hear,
And quickly stops his beak, trying to feed
The creature with a ruby from her ear,
Pretending it's a pomegranate seed.

Amaru

Well, but you surely do not mean to spend
Your whole life pining? Show some proper spirit.
Are there no other men? What is the merit
Of faithfulness to one? But when her friend
Gave this advice, she answered, pale with fear,
'Speak soft. My love lives in my heart, and he will hear.'

Amaru

Even now,
I remember her in love—
her body weak with fatigue,
swarms of curling hair
falling on pale cheeks,
trying to hide
the secret of her guilt.
Her soft arms
clung
like vines on my neck.

Bilhaṇa

Even now,
I remember her:
deep eyes' glittering pupils
dancing wildly in love's vigil,
a wild goose
in our lotus bed of passion—
her face bowed low with shame
at dawn.

Bilhaṇa

Even now,
I remember the wine-smeared lips
She innocently licked in love,
her frail form, her wanton long eyes,
her body rubbed golden
with saffron paste and musk,
her mouth spiced
with camphor and betel-nut.

Bilhaṇa

Translated from *Amaruśatakam* of
Amaru by John Brough and from
Chaurapanchaśikā of Bilhaṇa

by Barbara Stoller Miller

A Seasonal Anthology

Spring

Bright chains of amaranth about their hips,
fresh mango blossoms at their ears,
the red *asoka* on their breasts
and *madhavi* within their hair,
their bodies rouged all over
with yellow pollen of the *bakula:*
Such is our lasses' costume; may its advent
bring joy to lusty lads.

Savarṇi

Summer

The water of the pond is hot above
but sharply cold beneath.
When wayside wells run dry the tavellers come at noon,
and, covered though it is with floating moss
and muddy from the wallowing of buffaloes
not yet harnessed to the plough,
they stir it with their arms and drink.

Yogeśvara

Rains

Now come the days of changing beauty,
of summer's parting as the monsoon comes,
when the eastern gales come driving in,
perfumed with blossoming *arjuna* and *sal* trees,
tossing the clouds as smooth and dark as sapphires:
days that are sweet with the smell of rain-soaked earth.

Bhavabhuti

Autumn

The skies, growing gradually peaceful,
flow like long rivers across heaven,
with sand banks formed of the white clouds

and scattered flights of softly crying cranes;
rivers which fill at night with water-lily stars.

Viśākhadatta

Early Winter

The round villages are charming now at day's end
with threshing circles scattered on the common
for treading of the heaped up rice;
the dung fires cast a ring of smoke
that hangs low overhead from weight of frost.

Abhinanda

Later Winter

The heavy snow is falling, not easy to distinguish
among the smoke-grey *damanaka* trees,
but for the fire of dung it forms a tent of beauty.
At dawn it hides the rising sun,
and clinging to the travellers' furs,
shows them all white of every limb.

anon.

Translated from the anthology
Subhāshitaratnakośa of Vidyākara
by Daniel H. Ingalls

A Song

Sweet notes from his alluring flute echo nectar from his lips.
His restless eyes glance, his head sways, earrings play at his cheeks.
My heart recalls Hari here in his love dance,
Playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

A circle of peacock plumes caressed by moonlight crowns his hair.
A rainbow colors the fine cloth on his cloud-dark body.
My heart recalls Hari here in his love dance,
Playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

Kissing mouths of round-hipped cowherd girls whets his lust.
Brilliant smiles flash from the ruby-red buds of his sweet lips.
My heart recalls Hari here in his love dance,
Playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

Vines of his great throbbing arms circle a thousand cowherdesses.
Jewel rays from his hands and feet and chest break the dark night.
My heart recalls Hari here in his love dance,
Playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

His sandalpaste browmark outshines the moon in a mass of clouds.
His cruel heart is a hard door bruising circles of swelling breasts.
My heart recalls Hari here in his love dance,
Playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

Jeweled earrings in sea-serpent form adorn his sublime cheeks.
His trailing yellow cloth is a retinue of sages, gods, and spirits.
My heart recalls Hari here in his love dance,
Playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

Meeting me under a flowering tree, he calms my fear of dark time,
Delighting me deeply by quickly glancing looks at my heart.
My heart recalls Hari here in his love dance,
Playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

Jayadeva's song evokes an image of Madhu's beautiful foe
Fit for worthy men who keep the memory of Hari's feet.
  My heart recalls Hari here in his love dance,
  Playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

Translated from
Gita Govinda of Jayadeva, *II*.5
by Barbara Stoler Miller

The Nine *Rasas or* Flavours

1

Śṛṅgāra or the Erotic

Upwards, thick cloud-tresses, and below them
the mountain-slopes where the peacock plays;
See, on the ground snow flower-petal whiteness;
where shall the traveller rest his gaze?

from *Śatakatrayam of* Bhartṛhari

2

Hāsya or the Comic

He held her face, and would not let her go:
She tried to say, 'Oh no! No, no! Oh, no,
No, no! But through the kiss no sound would come
Except '*Hmm-hmm-hmm hm hm hmm hmmmm!*

from *Śārngadhara Paddhati*

3

Vīra or the Heroic

The lion looked with lazy-eyed disdain
upon the force of hunters and then turned back to sleep.
His lioness, all fear dispelled by her lord's valour,
deigned not to look.

Mentha in *Subhāṣhitaratnakośa*

4

Raudra or the Furious

He who dragged the daughter of Panchala,
weeping, by the hair;
who tore away her robe
before the kings and elders;
he from whose breast I swore
to drink the blood like wine

has fallen in my hands, O Kauravas.
Come save him if you can.

from *Veṇisamhāra* of Bhatta Nārāyaṇa

5

Bhayānaka or the Apprehensive

A man can also make a living from death—
If he works at it hard.
Look at us killers of spies, living by death
Which murders us all

from *Mudrārākśasam* of Viśākhadatta

6

Karuṇa or the Compassionate

Such bitter grief as this has cracked my heart,
    Which still has not burst apart;
And from my body, fainting from the smart,
    The senses do not depart.
Internal fires within my body blaze,
    And yet I am not consumed:
Fortune has left me with a mortal wound
    Yet still I live out my days.

From *Uttara Rāma Charita* of Bhavabhuti

7

Bībhatsa or the Horrific

The vultures beating back the flames
with strokes of their flapping wings
and each competing with fierce beaks against the rest,
have dragged from the blazing pyre a corpse
and gorged themselves on its freshly roasted,
almost flaming flesh.
See them with burning craws
now heading for the river.

Pāṇini in *Subhāshitaratnakośa*

8

Adbhuta or the Marvellous

No man, they say, has ever found the place
Where lotus-flowers within a lotus rise.
Yet I have seen two dark blue lotus eyes
Set in the fair white-lotus of your face.

from *Subhāshitāvali* of Vallabhadeva

9

Śānta or the Peaceful

Rich are they who can fulfill
the hope of suppliants,
do kindness to their enemies,
master the scriptures,
and retire to the forest

Silhaṇa in *Subhāshitaratnakośa*

1,2,6 and 8 translated by John Brough;
3,4,7 and 9 by Daniel H. Ingalls;
and 5 by V.N. Misra, L. Nathan and
S. Vatsyayan.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Some Sanskrit Educational Institutions in India

Sampoornanand Sanskrit University
Varanasi-2211002

Shri Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga
Sanskrit University
Darbhanga, Bihar

Shri Jagannath Sanskrit University
Puri, Orissa-752002

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya
Sanskrit Vidyapeeth (Deemed University)
Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi

Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth
(Deemed University)
Tirupati-517007

Shri Ranbir Sanskrit Vidyapeetha
Shastri Nagar
Jammu

Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth
Jaipur
Rajasthan

Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth
Aliganj, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

Sri Sada Shiv Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth
Puri, Orissa

Shri Jagannath Jha Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth
Azad Park, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh

Sri Guruvayur Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth
Trichur, Kerala

Rajiv Gandhi Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth
Singeri

Shri Rang Laxmi Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya
Vrindaban (Mathura) 281121, Uttar Pradesh

Jagdish Narayan Brahmchari Ashram
Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya
Lagma, Via Lohna Road
Rambhadharpur, Dt. Darbhanga
Bihar-846004.

Bhagwan Das Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya
P.O. Gurukul Kangri,
Haridwar, Distt. Saharanpur-249401

Dewan Krishan Kishore S.D.
Adarsh Sanskrit College
Ambala Cantt-133001
Haryana

Shri Ekarasanand Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya
Manipur-205001

The Madras Sanskrit College
84, Royapeetha High Road
Mylapore, Madras-600004

Mumbadevi Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya
C/o Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
K.M. Munshi Marg
Bombay-400007

Haryana Sanskrit Vidyapeetha
P.O. Bhagola (Palwal)
Distt. Faridabad
Haryana

Calicut Adarsh Sanskrit Vidyapeetha
Balussery
P.O. Balussery, Distt. Calicut (Kerala)
673612

Himachal Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya
Jangla (Rohru)
Distt. Shimla (H.P.) 171207

Lakshmi Devi Shroff Adarsh
Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Kali Rakha
Distt. Deogarh-814112 (Bihar)

Rajkumari Ganesh Sharma Adarsh
Sanskrit Vidyapeetha
Kolhanta, Patori
Distt. Darbhanga (Bihar)-846003

Swami Parankushacharya Adarsh
Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya
Hulasganj, Distt. Gaya
Bihar-804407

The above is not an exhaustive list*. The listing order is random. In addition most leading Indian Universities have Sanskrit Departments for post graduate study and research; some of them have provided distinguished contributors for the present publication.

Appendix 2

Some Indian Publishers of Sanskrit Books

Balaji Publishers
81, Bazar Street, Tirupati

Hindu Dharmashastra Granthanilayam
Kapileswarapuram
Distt. E. Godavari

Department of Publications, University of Guwahati
Guwahati, Assam

National Supply Agency
Golaghat
Distt. Sibsagar, Assam

K.S.D.S. University
Darbhanga, Bihar

Bharti Bhawan
Exhibition Road
Patna-1, Bihar

K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute
Museum Buildings
Budh Marg, Patna-1, Bihar
Motilal Banarasidass
Bunglow Road, Jawahar Nagar
Delhi-110007

Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers
54, Rani Jhansi Road
New Delhi-5

Meharchand Lachmandas, Kucha Chellan,
Daryaganj, Delhi

Chowkhamba Orientalia
9, Bunglow Road, Jawahar Nagar
Delhi-110007

Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan
I.U.B. Jawahar Nagar
Delhi-110007

Indian Book Centre
40/5, Shakti Nagar
Delhi-110007

Gujarat Vidyapith
Ashram Road
Ahmedabad-14

Usha Institute of Religious Studies,
Opp. Telephone Exchange, Sirsa (Hissar)

Kurukshetra University Publication Department,
Kurukshetra, Haryana

University Publishers,
65 R Model Town, Rohtak

J & K Academy of Art, Culture & Language,
Exchange Road
Jammu

Radhakrishan Anand and Co.
Pacca Danga
Jammu Tawi

Bangalore Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd.
86/87 Mysore Road
P.O. No. 1807, Bangalore-18

Oriental Research Institute
Mysore (Karnataka)

Central Institute of Indian Languages
Manasgangotari
Mysore-6

R.S. Wadhyar & sons
Kalpathi, Palghat
Kerala

Department of Publication
University of Kerala
Trivandrum-1

Nagpur University Publication Department
Nagpur

Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
Pune

Deccan College
Pune

The above is not an exhaustive list*, and the listing order is random.

*Source: Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.

Contributors

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Satya Pal Narang is Professor of Sanskrit, University of Delhi. Author of numerous books and articles, he is currently working on 'A Concordance of Classical Sanskrit Poetry' and the second volume of a 'Kálidása Bibliography'.

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Shriniwas Rath was Professor and Head, School of Sanskrit Studies, Vikram University, Ujjain. Currently he is the Director of the Kalidasa Akademi in the same city. His writings in Sanskrit and Hindi include poems, plays and radio features.

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Sukumari Bhattacharji took master's degreees in English and Sanskrit apart from a Ph.D. She has taught English literature for ten and Sanskrit for twenty-nine years, as also Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University. Her publications include eight books on mythology and aspects of ancient Indian life.

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